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JULY RECORDS

By THE EDITOR

UNDOUBTEDLY the two discs that gave me the greatest pleasure last month were the Parlophone record of Handel's *Sonata in C* for viola da gamba and harpsichord, and on the fourth side a *divertimento* of Haydn's for the same instruments. In my early days with the gramophone I should have suspected myself of allowing a literary or pictorial interest to bias my musical taste. There was a time when the only music I could endure was the viola da gamba, the viola d'amore, the lute, and the virginals. I read in an old *Isis* Idol of myself—perhaps I should explain that *Isis* Idols are short biographies, which appear every week in *The Isis*, of Oxford undergraduates who have distinguished themselves, usually in a sporting capacity—that "he confesses to an indifference for music except as represented by Mr. Dolmetsch."

This was written in 1904, and the chronicler was the

London editor of THE GRAMOPHONE, who in those days was a much more enthusiastic musician than myself, with red hair which grew with a wiry vigour that a professional pianist might have envied. When I listen to these Parlophone records I think that my taste, if more austere and exclusive than it is at the present day, was not so bad. The tone of the viola da gamba is something between that of a violoncello and a viola, with a quality of its own that I hesitate to call unmistakable when I remember how many musical people I have heard fail to identify far more familiar instruments. This sonata is early Handel, and it is the early Handel which I like best. I am not attempting to question the greatness and the grandeur of him later on, even if on me personally it makes the impression of a Salvation Army leader in full-bottomed wig and full-skirted coat. There is no doubt that he expressed the musical ideals of the English nation in

The Messiah, and though I wouldn't walk five yards to hear *The Messiah* (indeed, I would walk five miles not to hear it) I recognise the kind of brassy inspiration which it gave to English emotion. It is the kind of music which I feel the butcher Cumberland could enjoy. It is the music of port wine and apoplexy. It is the music I hear when I am turning over an album of Hogarth's plates, and if in the countenances of any of the characters I detect a faint expression of human nobility, I am willing to give the credit to Handel's music. If Income Tax collectors ever indulge in community singing, I have no doubt that they sing the choruses from *The Messiah*, for *The Messiah* is the first great anthem of man's enslavement by materialism. But this early sonata, written long ago at Hamburg when Anne was Queen of England, has a wistful beauty, a poignancy and a grace, which make any attempt to describe it or convey it in words as idle as an attempt to convey in words the perfume of pinks in a June garden. And that is what these old instruments possess, a curious spicy fragrance that their successors have lost. In aiming so much at fruit, instruments have lost their flowery quality. I do hope that we are to have more records like these of Anna Linde and Paul Grümmer. We shall get them of course if the public demands them. And the public won't do too badly for nine shillings. The furniture of an ugly room will be transformed to something that the Victoria and Albert Museum might envy. I can hardly bring myself to write such a hideous title in connection with this music. There will be gardens outside windows where there were no gardens before. Even Balmain's Big Bertha turns into a slip of a girl as she plays this music. It takes something very unusual in the way of gramophone records nowadays to make me write at this length. *Verb. sap.* And in case there is still any hesitation over buying these discs, I will add their numbers—E.10582 and E.10583. Long numbers, but then art like this is long, too.

I should hazard a guess that probably the most popular of all piano concertos is Grieg's. Debussy said his music was like frozen fondant, and that really was an extraordinarily happy simile, if an unkind one. The melody of the andante, which I should have expected to find a place in the twenty best tunes, was forgotten by most of the competitors. We used to think the two discs of De Greef and the R.A.H. Orchestra playing this the best recording of a piano concerto; now we have the concerto in full on four double-sided discs in an album (H.M.V.) with the same soloist, the same orchestra, and the same conductor. I played over again the discs of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto (H.M.V.), and I thought that it was a greater achievement of recording. I praised it with fervour in my first review, and I am inclined to say now that it is even better than I thought it was. I wonder whether this or the Grieg will prove to be the better seller in the long run.

I wish the recording companies, without going into figures, could let us have some information about relative sales. With these two concertos we can class Beethoven's Emperor, and I should very much like to know which led in popularity at the end of a year's sales. Talking of piano concertos, I am hoping that somebody will give us one of the Brahms, and I shouldn't grumble to get Chopin's, but I am open to bet that we shall get Saint-Saëns before either of the other composers is listed.

The German records so wisely issued by H.M.V. over here have more than fulfilled expectations. They are of the very finest quality. The record of Ignatieff's Chorus of Kuban-Cossacks (H.M.V. E.J.47) is as good as the singers themselves must have been, and I cannot say more than that. When we get community singing something like this it will be worth being excited over it. As things are at present, mass production of the voice thoroughly bores me. Partly this is due to the silly choice of songs. Who wants to hear five thousand people singing *Annie Laurie*? Maxwellton's braes cease to be bonny when five thousand people start bellowing about them.

There is a splendid ten-inch tenor record of Jaro Dworsky in the big aria from *Der Freischütz*. I recommend this tenor as one to be followed. Judging by this first record, I shall expect to see him in the red seal division before long, and then his black discs will vanish. So my advice is to buy now. This is a really impressive voice. The record of Fritz Massary singing two songs from Oscar Strauss' new musical comedy *The Queen* fills me with a gentle sadness, because I know that when *The Queen* is produced over here, as no doubt it will be in due course, we shall get one of our genteel musical comedy actresses spoiling for me two of the most delicious light melodies I have heard for a long while. I have never had the good fortune to see Fritz Massary, but here is a personality that gets triumphantly across to her audience even from the gramophone. I hope that everybody will make a note of this ten-inch plum label, and I hope that some of our ladylike young actresses will ask themselves if something more may not be required from a musical comedy star than a mincing voice, goo-goo eyes, and a sweet, impeccable nature. If our lady tennis champions went on the musical comedy stage, and if our musical comedy actresses represented us at lawn tennis, I fancy we should be in very much the same position with regard to other nations as we are at present.

The German orchestral records are all as good as we have heard they were, and if there be still any reader of this paper who doesn't already possess the *Tannhäuser Overture*, he may feel safe in acquiring this latest H.M.V. version under Dr. Blech. In disc E.G.233 one side is occupied by Brahms's Second *Hungarian Dance* played by Josef Wolfsthal, a violinist, and the other by Rubinstein's *Melody in F* played by Arnold Földesy, a 'cellist. This seems to

me a happy idea and one that might be more extensively followed, though I suppose the catalogue fans would protest. Incidentally, it is a splendid record of instrumental music. In the H.M.V. July bulletin there is a charming soprano record by Miss Rachel Morton of Tosti's *Serenade* and the *Chanson Hindoue*, so charming that one forgets the innumerable previous records of these two songs. Her voice is wonderfully true and easy, and I should like to hear her in a series of lieder. Elisabeth Schumann gives us, as might be expected, a beautiful record of Strauss's *Ständchen* and *Morgen*. Tito Schipa is not such a bawler as most Italian tenors of the moment, and he gives us two unhackneyed arias from *Lakmé* and *Werther*; yet even he is unnecessarily vigorous once or twice, and singing as he is in French this is more noticeable.

In the Columbia list there is a delightful record by Sammons of Svendsen's *Romance in G major*. The *Third Leonore Overture* under the bâton of Sir Henry Wood is better than the early H.M.V. electric recording, but I don't feel that it is completely successful somehow. I feel that Sir Henry Wood is a little tired of the *Third Leonore Overture*. Columbia are much to be congratulated on securing the baritone Carlo Galeffi for their list. His rendering of *Largo al factotum* is certainly the best of recent ones, though I don't think it displaces Stracciari's performance for the gramophone in earlier days. I enjoyed his *Dio possente* too, but I haven't the standards by which to judge it that Mr. Herman Klein has, and if ever you find my opinion of a singer clashing with his you'll be well advised to follow him. Of old records of *Dio possente*, the one I remember liking best was De Luca's rendering. We have had a dose of *Rienzi* Overtures lately; but the Parlophone issue conducted by Moerike is certainly as good as any of the others. Bettendorf and chorus in the Easter Hymn from *Cavalleria* is a tremendous affair, and costs two shillings more than the usual Parlophone twelve-inch disc in consequence. There is a good 'cello record in the same list which should be noted by our best tune competitors of Chopin's *Nocturne in E flat* and Davidoff's *At the Fountain*. The Dajos Bela Trio and Edith Lorand come up to the scratch as usual, though that is hardly a tactful term to use in connection with the gramophone.

The last three Vocalion lists have been thoroughly dull, only redeemed by some remarkable performances of the Life Guards' Band. They have a splendid contralto in Clara Serena, and she is given one of the *Indian Love Lyrics* and *Sweet and Low* to display her voice. They have, in fact, lots of good singers, but they all ride round and round on the old hacks of the recording rooms, the Rosinantes of the concert platform. Adrian Boult does nothing but conduct the most eternally played orchestral works which have already been admirably recorded elsewhere, and altogether I have been much depressed by recent

bulletins. The answer will be that the public does not want anything new, and after reading through the entries in our Best Tune Competition I suppose we have reluctantly got to admit this. Nobody denies that the *Londonderry Air* is an exquisite melody, but as far as I remember the only instruments on which this has not been played are the xylophone, the mouth-organ, and the hand-saw, and the only voice that has not sung the uninspired words written to it by Mr. Weatherly is a boy's treble. I have no doubt that Master Lough will shortly oblige. All over England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Dominions people must be sitting with collections of the *Londonderry Air* in front of them, cataloguing them, registering them, polishing them with special pads, content to exist with nothing but the *Londonderry Air* in its various forms. The last time I was in Londonderry I left it, riding on a pig down to the boat in the year 1885, and I feel sure that this pig grunted the *Londonderry Air* all along the quay. I remember waking in the middle of the night, frightened by the tramp of many footsteps, and being held up to the window by my mother to see the soldiers leading by two priests whom they had just arrested, and I remember a nurse that I much disliked trying to enlist my sympathies with the besieged in Dutch William's time, and because she took the part of the besieged my tremendous sympathy with the besiegers. Belfast readers must forgive me if I say that I was no Orangeman from the time I was landed in Ireland a few weeks old. To this day I regret the boom that was broken by King William's rescuing ships. Far off things and battles long ago! Perhaps they account for my faint prejudice against the *Londonderry Air*, or perhaps it comes from hating London so much as a child that even Edward Lear's nonsense rhyme, *There was an old Derry down derry*, did not make Londonderry a sympathetic spot by that flavour of words which is so keen in a child, and which must have been so much more potent in the youth of the world than now. However, I did enjoy riding down the quay to catch the boat for Glasgow, in company with a number of exported pigs. I seem to have wandered far from the Vocalion Company and their hackneyed records.

I look through those bulletins once more and I see that once more Saint-Saëns' *Le Cygne* has been recorded and played by a really good 'cellist like Jacques Van Lier, and then I look at the July GRAMOPHONE and I see that *Le Cygne* occupies the tenth place in our list of popular tunes. Now why? The result of this competition has shaken my self-confidence. I realize how completely isolated I am from popular opinion. I realize that I have been deluding myself for the last four years with the notion that I was in touch with the simple things of every-day life. But before I say any more about our competition and while my thoughts are still in Ireland, let me call our readers' attention to two of Mr. Henecy's records

issued in Dublin. Miss Josephine Curran has an individual soprano, and I commend her to the judgment of those who appreciate singing. "Appealing" is a trite epithet, but it is the only one I can find for Miss Curran's lovely voice. It is not that I do not thoroughly agree with our readers who chose the tunes they did (apart from *Le Cygne*). I do cordially agree with them that they are all good tunes, but what I can't help feeling, after reading through the papers of the competition, is that most of the entrants never gave a chance to other tunes without question equally good, and to my mind much better. In not one paper sent in did I find any sign of so-called highbrow choosing. The glorious *Allegretto* from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony finds itself among the minority voters between, let us say, Schubert's *Serenade* and *Drink to me only with thine eyes*, and this makes me think that, if a lot of our readers had had a little faith and made themselves as familiar with Beethoven's Seventh Symphony as with the Unfinished Symphony, the *Allegretto* might easily have appeared in the first twenty. One or two familiar Russian melodies like *Kasbek* and *Monotonously rings the little bell* crept in between the *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria* and Dvorák's *Humoresque*. There, again, I feel that readers have lacked faith and not made themselves familiar with those melodies. The most conspicuous omission in the voting papers (in which 750 tunes were mentioned) was *Wotan's Farewell*. In reading through the papers I may have missed it, and if I did I must apologise to the reader in whose list I did not notice it, but it certainly did not occur more than once. Now this to me is really incomprehensible. Of the many exquisite melodies of Schumann the only three to find favour were *Träumerei* with a fairly high number of votes, and here and there the song *Widmung* and the first movement of the piano concerto. I feel that *Träumerei*, played on every kind of instrument, has been thrust upon the public by the recording companies. But does the dog wag the tail or does the tail wag the dog? A little of both, I suppose. Why is the *Andante Cantabile* from Tchaikovsky's quartet the only movement from a string quartet that wins any kind of place? Surely here the answer is because it has been brought more before the notice of the public than any other. I am quite sure that if I could afford to issue all the adagios from Beethoven's quartets on the cornet, the mouth-organ, the saxophone, the accordion, etc., etc., I could ram those adagios down the public's throat. After I had written my Beethoven progress for the Man in the Street last month I very nearly cancelled it because I thought that I was taking too much for granted in assuming that so many of our readers were totally unacquainted with Beethoven; but after reading through the papers of this competition I do not regret having printed it. It is significant that the melodies of Beethoven which have been longer before the public in recorded form

are the ones that earn most votes. Nothing from the symphonies more recently recorded for the first time is mentioned. However, from another point of view the result of this competition is encouraging, for I believe that after another ten years of recording we shall find an entirely different set of melodies voted for. I agree with the present choice if the choosers are going to live within a few minutes of a railway station for the rest of their lives; but I wouldn't choose those twenty tunes if I knew I was going to be on a desert island for the rest of my life. And I feel pretty sure that most of the competitors who were marooned eternally with those twenty tunes would be playing ducks and drakes with *Le Cygne* and several others before they had been isolated many years. However, we can be thankful for one thing: neither *The Rosary* nor *The Broken Melody* was among the first thirty-four, and I believe that ten years ago they would both have been in the first dozen.

I hope I have made it clear from the above remarks that I am not quarrelling with the choice our readers have made, but with what I am convinced is the lack of faith they are showing about the tunes they have probably not heard very often. Wireless is going to help; but owing to the selfish clamour of complacent half-educated lovers of music the policy of repeating *ad nauseam* the old favourites is becoming every week more noticeable. So once more I beg readers who have not believed me when I have vowed that they would enjoy the *allegretto* from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to remember that there were other readers with a little more faith who placed it between *Softly Awakes my Heart* and Offenbach's *Barcarolle*. It is no good trying to call such readers highbrow. I wish that pestilent expression had never crossed the Atlantic, for it is coming to be used as a contemptuous expression for what is really nothing more than ordinary intelligence and the humility of genuine good taste. The real highbrow has no humility, nor, I may add, has the real low-brow. The one is conceited enough to think that he approximates to the angels and the other is vain enough to congratulate himself that he has not moved far from the apes. I give notice that this is the last time the epithet highbrow will be printed in these pages. In future, when any contributor or correspondent uses the word, it will be changed by the proof reader to "intelligent" or "priggish" according to the sense that the contributor or correspondent intends to convey by using it.

I propose to discuss the completion of the *Unfinished Symphony* next month. The announcement of the contest made by the Columbia people raises some interesting points.

I hope that all of you will give us your support in trying to make the B.B.C.'s gramophone hour on Thursdays more entertaining than it used to be.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

Tone and the Education of the Ear

By ERNEST FOWLES, F.R.A.M.

A FRIEND said to me recently that he conceived the most wonderful thing about the gramophone to be its power to reproduce the various tone-individualities of the orchestra. The remark was enough to provoke a course of thought which led me to ask myself if such reproduction were, in general, as faithful as the enthusiasm of my friend would seem to claim. We musicians are so grateful to have a means at hand whereby we may listen when we will to the orchestral and chamber masterpieces of our art that we may unwittingly allow our gratitude to riot with our reason, and, in that way fill, by an effort of the imagination, the gap between truth and the attempted similitude of truth.

It is quite clear that the imagination is allowed, nay, is compelled, to work in this way with radio reception. In a very large number of cases the listener to wireless orchestral music is receiving impressions of the orchestral families altogether out of their own true tone-values. This may of course be due to fundamental imperfections either in the transmitting or in the receiving instruments, but the fact points in the case of wireless to a conclusion diametrically opposed to the opinion expressed by my friend with reference to the gramophone.

It will scarcely be questioned that appreciation of the two main types of tone lies at the root of all real aural training. On the one side there is the family tone distinguishing the various instruments of each class; on the other, that practically indefinable attribute peculiar to the individual artist, and which we rightly regard as a vital part of the expression of his personality. At the moment we are thinking of the first type, or that which differentiates the violin from the flute, the 'cello from the bassoon, and so forth.

Now, it seems to me that any method of reproduction which records this type of tone imperfectly and in a purely approximate manner is doing infinite disservice to the race. Music consists of many elements, and musical effects can be wrought by various combinations of these elements; but the tone-values of the art are as precious to its life as the tone of the baby-voice to the mother or that of the fawn to its hind. Consequently, any means which conceals or caricatures, which depreciates or destroys, the distinguishing tones of music must cause deterioration to the very sense through which all musical impressions are received.

In the early days of the gramophone musical tone was at a discount, the supersession of the old

"twang" (now only heard in instruments of the cheaper or toy variety) forming a background through which it was impossible that the true tones of instrument or voice could penetrate. I have heard records which, in those days, used to pass muster, but from which every keen observer of tone would recoil in horror. But, mark you, these keen observers were, and still are, but relatively few in number. The mass of people listen quite contentedly to raucous and absolutely unfaithful reproductions of tone. The point is important, for it shows that, like colour in the art of painting, the appreciation of tone is a matter of culture and training. One does not need the Galoshes of Fortune to perceive that the reception of tone-qualities by the mass of mankind is purely negative. An ordinary listener may hear a familiar tune played upon a flute, a violin or even a cornet; but his attention will be riveted upon the tune, to the exclusion of the precise quality of the tone-medium used to express it. We may go further and suggest that such a listener will remain untouched by the very obvious differences between good and bad *personal* tone. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to assert that the conception of tone possessed by the average man or woman bears the same relation to true tone as the old oleograph bore to colour in the reproductions of Victorian times.

All this is very elementary, and were the function of tone in music more perfectly apprehended, there would be no need to touch upon this side of the subject. But the recent gigantic improvements in gramophonic recording have brought the whole question into the foreground. If I were asked to name what I considered to be the greatest of all the improvements, I should unhesitatingly point to *Tone*. A short while since I was listening to one of the Beethoven string quartets recorded by the Gramophone Company and to Schubert's A minor quartet issued by the National Gramophonic Society. Their effect upon me was stupendous. With eyes closed it was impossible, so perfect was the illusion, to resist the suggestion that the four players were actually performing in the room. Here, too, were the two types of tone. Not only was it possible easily to distinguish the three kinds of string tone, but the personal attributes of the four players were equally and almost humorously clear.

Now this marks an epoch in the development of the gramophone, and one which ought to be, nay, must be, remarked by all musical folk. There are still die-hards among musicians; though, curiously, their objections rarely seem to have been advanced on the ground of

tone *per se*. It has been my happy privilege to turn a few from the error of their ways! And this has generally been achieved by an appeal to tone, and usually through the ministry of a string quartet.

To sum up—tone, as the soul of music, demands that, in all performances or reproduction of performances, it should be preserved in its pristine purity. While wireless halts in the transmission of pure tone that of the gramophone is advancing by leaps and bounds. The one, at present, is misdirecting its devotees in the path towards tone-perception; the

other is guiding its disciples aright. Probably in neither case is the end in sight. There will be improvements and improvements of improvements. For the moment the honours are certainly with the gramophone, and it may eventually be that, when we want the news, a play or a lecture, we shall turn to radio, but that, when our desires turn to the language of tone, we shall put down our receivers or disconnect the loud speaker and open the gramophone, knowing that there only shall we get the real tone-values which form the most intimate part of the art of music.



THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

Problems and Prospects of Opera

I AM thankful to the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE for allowing me to exercise the privileges of a "free lance." This enables me to escape now and then from the thrall of the recording siren and take up for discussion cognate subjects like Opera, in which I feel somehow that the average reader of these pages is almost as deeply interested. I bear in mind the fact that much space has already been devoted thereto. I am aware that opera generally has been more discussed in the public press of late than it ever was in its history. But the last word has not been said; nor is it likely to be so long as we remain *in statu quo* and make no real advance towards the goal which well-meaning mentors who can talk much but do little else kindly continue to point out for us.

The goal itself is, or ought to be, easy enough to perceive. What we are wanting, as it seems to me, is a new opera-house with about twice the holding capacity of Covent Garden, in a central part of the metropolis, and attached to it a strong all-round company to perform opera—light as well as serious—during the greater part of the year. When it is not performing in London this company should be touring in the provinces and making money, as it assuredly would, in the dozen principal towns of the Kingdom where they do not support a permanent opera troupe of their own. Such a plan is practically the one that was projected by the late Carl Rosa some forty years ago, when ill-health and death stepped in and prevented its fulfilment. It stands equally good for to-day, because in the main conditions have not changed, except that we are now even worse off for

opera of the right sort than we were in those days. Stay!—I forgot; there is one thing more we had then which we do not possess now, and that is—the right man to organize, govern, and administer the whole enterprise upon truly national lines.

For of course it has to be a national undertaking, in the sense that the people of this country, the legitimately musical population of the British Isles, shall look upon it as their own and take a pride in its welfare accordingly. That this kind of pride is not easy to arouse I am perfectly aware. It involves outlay in the form of subscriptions and capital, and the experiences of the past year or so do not encourage a belief that the requisite "million," or whatever the wherewithal be assessed at, will be secured by preliminary meetings and public appeals. I do not pretend to foreshadow the financial jugglery whereby National Opera will ultimately be set going and kept going until it is solidly established; but that it can and must be accomplished somehow there can be no question. Maybe—who knows?—the occult scheme of Sir Thomas Beecham is destined to succeed where the somewhat naïve and too sanguine proposals of Mr. Isidore de Lara were doomed to failure. A definite opinion on this point cannot be expressed until the former is fully disclosed, and at the moment of writing it is not. I wish it were. It is not good policy, in my opinion, to keep the public on tenterhooks too long in a matter of this sort. Curiosity quickly dies out, and people get tired of hearing about operative projects that are to achieve wonders; yet never arrive within hailing distance of a start.

At the present moment there appears to be serious danger of our falling between the two stools—that is, between cheap good opera, as exemplified in the great Continental cities of Europe (which is primarily what we are in need of), and expensive luxurious opera upon the grand scale, as exemplified during eight hectic weeks of the year at Covent Garden. The product of the London Opera Syndicate may be very fine, but when all is said and done it can benefit only the few. It is opera for the “classes,” not for the masses. Nearly every night of the recent season all the expensive seats were sold; not a reserved seat was to be had at the box office for the amphitheatre, stalls or dress circle, unless purchased days beforehand or else at a heavy premium at the libraries; the gallery was invariably packed. In the aggregate some thousands of opera-lovers were turned away hungry and unsatisfied because the house would not accommodate them. And, in spite of all this evident yearning for well-performed opera generally and German opera in particular, we are told that it may not be worth while to go on because the business entails risk, because the expenses are so terribly heavy and are barely covered by the receipts, or may even result in a loss for the Syndicate.

But who expects to make opera pay? Read the autobiographies of the Great Impresarios (such as there are) and judge for yourself whether operatic management is one of those favoured occupations, like building cheap motor cars or running cinema combines, which, if adroitly “taken at the flood, lead on to fortune.” It is quite certain that, *au fond*, our Beechams and our Courtaulds, who genuinely love good opera, do not dabble in it with any idea of profit; neither, on the other hand, ought they to complain when the balance is on the wrong side. I always think in this connection of something that was said to me by the late Sir Joseph Beecham (father of Sir Thomas) during his first season of Russian opera at Drury Lane. It is a true story and has never yet been put into print. We were chatting in the dress circle corridor during one of the performances—I think it was of *Boris Godounov*, with Chaliapin in the title-rôle.

“A horribly expensive business,” I remarked, “giving opera on such a scale as this, with no subscription to back you!”

“Yes,” said Sir Joseph. “The money goes out a good deal faster than it comes in.”

“You don’t seem to worry much about the losses,” said I.

“No,” said Sir Joseph, whom I knew to be a millionaire. Then a pause before I framed another sentence:

“Are you very fond of opera, Sir Joseph?”

“I am,” was the reply.

“Fond enough to be doing this?”

“I don’t know.” Another pause, and then the truth came out: “You see, I regard it as a splendid

advertising medium. It helps to keep the name before the public, both on the hoardings and in the papers.” We smiled and parted.

That was some fifteen years ago, and since then much water has flowed under the bridges. But opera has become a dearer instead of a cheaper luxury. For one thing, the Syndicates, labouring under the disadvantages that a costly, unremunerative theatre like Covent Garden imposes upon its lessees, have found it impossible to give opera under economical conditions. Their public refuses to put up with any but expensive foreign artists and conductors. It will only subscribe in advance for what it considers to be the best talent, regardless of the utter impracticability of attaining equal merit in the performances themselves, owing to the inadequate allowance of time for rehearsing. In a word, the public which supports Covent Garden is utterly spoilt for eight weeks in May and June, and during the remainder of the year it is content to have nothing. As for opera sung in English, it will tell you plainly that it does not want it at any price, no matter how first-rate the quality. All of which points to a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

But is the operatic history of this country—a history not lacking in its glories and triumphs—to end here? Surely not. There must be a remedy of some sort against a *débâcle* that would mean disgrace in the eyes of all the neighbouring nations, to whom opera is part of their daily artistic life.

May I humbly suggest that the first step to be taken in the direction of that remedy should be to interest London in the idea of a new opera-house? We must have that to begin with. If the money can be found for cinemas and greyhound race-courses, on the supposition that they will pay in the long run, assuredly there must be capital available for erecting a simple large building on some accessible spot, say after the design of the Volkstheater in Vienna, and where the experiment of performing opera on attractive but economical lines could be fully put to the test. That there is nothing novel in this proposition I am fully aware. It sounds like the Isidore de Lara scheme over again; it may even be the root-idea of the long-delayed new Beecham scheme for which, as I write, the world is still patiently waiting. But the resemblance cannot be helped, for the reason that the essential preliminary to any great metropolitan plan for opera must be the provision of a new home for it. Isidore de Lara was right when he talked of an auditorium to hold 5,000 people at reasonably low prices (I would put them at 7s. 6d. down to 1s. 6d.); but he was unpractical when he talked about a capital of a million to be subscribed by the public in single pound shares.

The public—by which I mean the whole community—must be interested somehow in the scheme, of course; but the money for the building, which ought not to exceed £100,000, must come from five or six

rich men, ready and willing to found a great musical institution as they would be to endow a new college for a university or a new church for their native city. There must be no debt or encumbrance of any sort on the new opera-house. It must belong to London, and the opera-lovers of London must meet the cost of its upkeep, which they will effect by the simple act of filling it every time there is a good performance. And there should never be any *bad* performances. Somehow I fancy it will be found that Sir Thomas Beecham's idea, when it emerges from his resourceful brain, will be found to include a plan for making the public part-shareholders in the undertaking. But has not the B.N.O.C. tried something of that kind already, and without success? Well, *nous verrons*.

POLYGLOT OPERA.

The experiences of the past season at Covent Garden were not such as to recommend either in the near or distant future the employment of mixed nationalities for the casts of popular operas. I say this in relation to the Italian or French, not the German representations. The term "polyglot opera" came into use during the régime of the late Sir Augustus Harris; but it did not, as is often supposed, imply the singing of more than one language in the same work, such as is occasionally heard abroad when "guest" celebrities appear who are not familiar with the language of the country. It meant simply that operas were being sung in the texts to which they had been originally composed. This wholly artistic proceeding was accompanied, in Harris's time, by an especial degree of care to secure the correct pronunciation of the particular language, whatever it might be. I do not say that exceptions to the rule did not occur; but they were extremely rare, particularly in the French répertoire, which was then much larger than it is to-day. The American prima donnas might worry us now and then, though not more than a certain Australian *diva* who shall be nameless; while the incomparable brothers Jean and Edouard de Reszke, whose French was like that of born Frenchmen, did not escape criticism when they declaimed Wagner in German with a soft Slavonic accent.

I cannot, however, call to mind a single polyglot example or an instance of mixed nationalities from out of those bygone days when the consequences were so disastrous as in the recent Covent Garden revivals of *Les Huguenots* and *Carmen*. The number of square pegs in round holes on those two occasions was simply astonishing. Concerning Meyerbeer's opera, I have personally nothing more to say; I only hope that the youthful critics who are still belabouring a vulnerable libretto may all live long enough to hear the music adequately interpreted. But the *Carmen* performance—as yet unnoticed in these columns—was on the whole let off a great deal too lightly; albeit I admit that in certain quarters certain features thereof did

receive the verbal castigation that they merited. Some of the shortcomings were due to insufficient rehearsal, which our present system unfortunately renders inevitable, and which in a permanent operatic establishment can always be prevented. To my ears, though, an even worse shock was the French accent of the German singers. It was the living verification of a defect that I have frequently had occasion to point out in their records of French operatic pieces.

Maria Olczewska, a great artist in the parts that fit her, proved an almost wholly disappointing *Carmen*. The music did not suit her rich, heavy voice and noble style; nor did the Spanish character seem to strike a sympathetic chord in her direct, un-subtle, even if coquettish and temperamental, nature. For a Pole her French accent ought to have been more free from the solecisms which one expects in the case of the Teutonic singer, whereof the charming Delia Reinhardt—the joyous Ocktavian and the irresponsible Cherubino of our dreams—gave such a coruscating display in the music of Micaela. The constant substitution of the closed *é* or *et* for the broad *è* or the still more open *ai* was positively exasperating, and it was not less so when done *vice versa*. Besides, there should be a simple spiritual appeal in Micaela's well-known air, *Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante*, and this the fair Delia seemed to miss altogether in her search for a dramatic rendering. The smugglers' ensembles could have been sung much more crisply, with greater polish and *entrain*; and I agree with the critic who pointed out the sin of omission committed by Vincenzo Bellezza in leaving out the three women's repetitions of the word "l'amour" at the end of the *Toreador's Song*.

But let me close on a note of praise. Both Fernand Anseau (Don José) and Marcel Journet (Escamillo) justified their high reputations, won alike on the operatic stage and the gramophone. I reckon Anseau to be the finest French tenor of the day, and only wish that others could successfully imitate the steadiness and virility of his magnificent tone. The veteran Journet, whose début at Covent Garden I witnessed thirty years ago, is as sturdy and reliable now as he was then.

HERMAN KLEIN.

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GRAMOPHONE CELEBRITIES

XVIII.—Dr. Weissmann

By J. F. PORTE

DR. Frieder Weissmann is one of those successful musicians who were intended by their fathers for another profession. He was to have studied Law, but at a very early age, and against the wishes of his father, he gave earnest attention to studying the pianoforte and musical composition, and later became head pupil of the famous Genf teacher, Rehberg. He actually visited the Heidelberg University to study Law, but here received also further lessons in composition from the old teacher, Philipp Wolfrum, and later went to Munich, where he studied with Walter Braunfels. It was in this town that the possibilities of a career as conductor were thought of, mainly through the medium of the famous operatic director of music, Bruno Walter (who is on Columbia records). Here also, in spite of all opposition, Weissmann determined to adopt music as his work. After passing many examinations he began his career in the theatre, conducting at the Frankfurt Opera House. After holding several positions as concert conductor in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dresden, Munich and Berlin, he was finally appointed to the State Opera House in the last-named town. The Director of the house, Professor Max von Schillings (who is on Polydor records), soon recognized the talent of the ambitious young conductor, who was now given opportunities to present himself where before only established and famous conductors had performed. Even now he is only 31 years of age.

It was while Dr. Weissmann was at the Berlin State Opera House that the makers of Parlophone gramophone records discovered him. From conducting small works he was soon made responsible for the great operatic and symphonic recordings made for the Parlophone repertoire by the orchestra of the Berlin State Opera House. Dr. Weissmann has in the meantime also directed at the famous Opera House at Münster, in Westphalia, and has been appointed conductor of the German Opera Company that is to go to the Argentine this year.

Continental critics who have heard Dr. Weissmann are universally agreed that he has a great future for his talents. Those who have heard no more of him than his gramophone records can show cannot fail to agree that here is another of those distinguished musical personalities introduced by the gramophone to England. Courage, self-discipline, learning, intellect, energy and poetry are all present in the varied selection of his work that the gramophone, through Parlophone records, has privileged us to hear.

His readings at present show an enthusiastic avoidance of stodginess, and they have a fine enough taste to resist injecting modern sensationalism and novelty into the honoured classics of orchestral music. On the other hand, Dr. Weissmann's art is not devoid of dangerous prospects. Considering the extent of his years and the fact that he is a good German (and now a Berliner Musikdirektor), a certain similarity of soundness and sanity that is typical of all his readings may easily develop into stodginess. At present he is in the happy state of enthusiasm without being excited. Will his development be to greater power or a dull Kapellmeister? Perhaps the gramophone will allow us in this country to follow this career of promise.

Dr. Weissmann naturally has limitations to his musical sympathies; yet he is fine enough to make one of these a matter of peculiar interest to the musician. I refer especially to his reading of Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie Pathétique*. One would hesitate to call this performance a great failure, for there are dozens of bars where it is absolutely thrilling. The average good German has two main distinct mental outlooks. One is thoroughness and bigness, the other being an emotional partnership that may be described as sentimentally romantic. The German often accuses the Englishman of being phlegmatic. It would be happier to say that the latter has not so direct an inheritance of German romanticism, that diet of oxygen and ether which poisoned all German music after Schumann, and which left Brahms to fight a losing battle for higher art and the Englishman blinded to the claims of French music. In Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie Pathétique* Dr. Weissmann is the typical German romanticist. Its hectic excitement he tries to turn into heroism, and, with the usual result of German interpretation of Russian thought, it becomes merely bombast. The morbid fatalism of the symphony he assimilates with a mental digestion only too obviously tuned to mawkish, Schumannesque sentiment.

The latter is very apparent in Dr. Weissmann's reading of the second subject of the first movement (E.10207, Part 2) and the whole of the last (E.10211-12), while the bombastic aspect is to be noticed in the third movement, *Allegro molte vivace* (E.10210-11), which becomes a sort of Kaisermarsch, magnificently played! Tchaikovsky said of this symphony, "Without exaggeration, I have put my whole soul into this work." Dr. Weissmann adds the



Dr. WEISSMANN

atmosphere of a Berlin café mixed with the Prussian boot and saddle, a typical German translation of old Russian thought. As regards the second movement (E.10209-10), he evidently found it frankly uninteresting. The reading of the symphony as a whole is immensely interesting as a contrast to the conductor's fine authority in the classical symphonies of Haydn and Beethoven. Passages in parts 3 and 4 (E.10208) of the first movement are positively thrilling.

The issue by the Parlophone Company of the whole of Beethoven's nine symphonies was, and is surely, one of the landmarks of gramophone history. With the exception of No. 7, in A, they were all directed by Dr. Weissmann. The composer is losing some of the indiscriminating hero-worship which has been his lot for half a century, but the gramophone now offers opportunity for individual estimation of exactly how much one can stand of "the immortal nine." Dr. Weissmann gives the symphonies the best read presentation for home study and enjoyment. His readings are deliberate enough to show a great deal of the wonderful detail of these works. He avoids the high-speed obscurity of the virtuoso conductor which sometimes passes as a true picture of Beethoven's orchestral imagination.

The small number of strings used in these records are very good; the wood-wind is clean and neat; but in the brass department the Germans would probably give much to have a horn player like Mr. Aubrey Brain and a trumpet player like Mr. Solomon, the two great English orchestral musicians. The orchestra as a whole can cause little worry to a first-rate English symphony organisation, while, like all European orchestras, it is considerably behind any of the best in the U.S.A. Its entries are sometimes ragged, but the players take their work seriously and mostly do very well indeed.

The Beethoven overtures, *Leonore No. III*, *Name-Day* and the lumbering *Consecration of the House* are finely read. The great *crescendi* in the first named show the conductor's power of building up climaxes. Dr. Weissmann's conducting of the Mozart symphonies in G minor and E flat major is pleasant and, in most respects, adequate. He is not a Mozart expert, but obtains much 18th century rhythmic grace and charm from the *Three Old Dances*. The Mozart overtures are played in a manner typical of Berlin opera. In Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* the conductor is great, as are his players. These Berliners know better than to treat Haydn as only fit for amateurs; which is more than can be said for most English orchestras.

Of the miscellaneous works, Dr. Weissmann apparently finds Brahms to be no successor to Beethoven. His reading of the *Academic Festival* overture unjustly makes the composer a dreary thinker. The present writer holds no all-round enthusiasm for Sir Hamilton Harty's interpretations, but the Hallé Orchestra's record of the overture under discussion

is far superior. The same remarks apply to the respective records of Berlioz's *Roman Carnival* overture, for Harty really is a great man in Berlioz. The Hallé trumpets can walk over those of the Berlin State Opera.

Dr. Weissmann's reading of Grieg is curiously revealing. In the *Peer Gynt No. 2* and *Sigurd Jorsalfar* (Sigurd the Crusader) suites he obtains moods of lyric beauty, drama and fatalism that show the Norwegian composer to be one of the most original figures in contemporary music. The conductor understands Norwegian fatalism much better than he does Russian. Borghilda's Dream in the *Sigurd Jorsalfar* especially justifies Grieg's claim to be the essential musical counterpart of the Norwegian drama.

Dr. Weissmann's *Carmen* suite is as good as can be expected from a German trying to read French thought. Smetana's *Bartered Bride* and Goldmark's *Sakuntala* overtures are very well read and played; the conductor understands these better. Weber's *Oberon* overture is read with a curious mixture of German classicism and romanticism, which is perhaps true to this composer's mentality and period.

The classification of records is made solely as regards the reading and playing. A technical authority on gramophone records *qua* records would probably place many of them in different order. Owing to the claims of newer, electric recording, Dr. Weissmann's records may be considered in some quarters as out of date. This, of course, is a case of the familiar point of difference between mechanic and musician in gramophone matters. The former, quite properly, has now little use for the Dr. Weissmann records. The musician, however, will not pass over these important additions to the musical culture of the gramophone, for they cannot become out of date in this respect. Electrical re-recording may not alter the value of the readings. The *Ninth Symphony* is in Grade 2 as a compromise. The reading is Grade 1 and the playing Grade 3!

GRADED LIST OF RECORDS.

GRADE I.

Beethoven. Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8; *Leonore No. III*; *Name-Day*; *Consecration of the House*.

Goldmark. *Sakuntala*.

Grieg. *Borghilda's Dream* (Sigurd Jorsalfar Suite); *Peer Gynt*, Suite II.

Mozart. *Three Old Dances*.

Tchaikovsky. *Symphonie Pathétique*, 1st movement, parts 3 and 4; 4th movement.

GRADE II.

Beethoven. Symphonies 5, 9.

Bizet. *Carmen Suite*.

Grieg. *Triumphal March* (Sigurd Jorsalfar).

Mendelssohn. *Overtures*.

Mozart. *Overtures and Symphonies*.

Smetana. *Bartered Bride*.

Tchaikovsky. Symphonie Pathétique, 3rd movement.

Weber. Oberon.

GRADE III.

Berlioz. Roman Carnival.

Brahms. Academic Festival.

Tchaikovsky. Symphonie Pathétique, 1st movement, parts 1 and 2; 2nd movement.

Some of the above old recordings may be re-issued, while others have already been superseded, but under other conductors. For instance, the *Leonore No. III* overture has been re-issued as an electrical recording, but under the bâton of George Széll. For those who still wish for Dr. Weissmann's reading, the older records are still available.

Dr. Weissmann has made a number of electrical records, chiefly overtures, which will be issued in due course. Those already available fall into Grade 1 because of their splendid standard of performance and adequate facilities for reproduction. The Parlophone orchestral record gives much fine detail; strings, brass, and wood-wind, all being excellent. Violins and horns are generally particularly faithful, while the general balance gives the orchestra in correct miniature rather than mere volume of sound. A director of the Parlophone Company demonstrated

to me that these records reproduce finely with Chromic steel needles, while the wear was not excessive. The following are Dr. Weissmann's electrical orchestral records:—

Beethoven. Symphony, "The Battle of Vittoria."

Mozart. Don Juan overture.

Flotow. Martha overture.

Wagner. Grand March from Tannhäuser. (This fills the odd side of Rienzi overture under another conductor).

Of these, the *Don Juan* is especially fine in every way. It is good to hear a finely played performance of the old fashioned *Martha* overture.

An official of the Parlophone Company has told me that an unpublished Beethoven work has been recorded by Dr. Weissmann, and will be issued in the autumn. This is the *Jena Symphony*, about which I know nothing. The recording should carry on the idea of giving us the *Battle of Vittoria*, an unfamiliar novelty by Beethoven. These little known and unknown works by the master at least make interesting additions to the collector's and student's libraries. It was a good idea of the Company to print on one of their supplements a reproduction of the original title page of the *Battle of Vittoria* symphony.

J. F. PORTE.



ORGANS IN THE CINEMA

By J. MORTON HUTCHESON

Cinema Editor, "The Melody Maker and British Metronome"

THE use of this instrument in the Cinema as a means of accompanying the "silent drama" of the screen is practically a "post-war" innovation.

Previous to 1919 there were few organs in cinemas, scattered throughout this country, but none of them of any outstanding merit. During the war-time years I was repeatedly requested by a proprietor, for whom I was working at that period, to go and inspect organs which he had been informed of as being for sale. The majority of these were small, two-manual instruments in Churches, Chapels and small Halls. I knew exactly the kind of organ I was going to see and hear, and often told my principal that it would only be a waste of time and money on his part sending me to view them, but the price asked for the instruments in question was so ridiculously cheap that my employer thought he would be getting a bargain, just as in the same way I had been able to purchase several very excellent second-hand pianos for his cinemas. But buying pianos and organs, second-hand, are two very different propositions. However, I saw all the organs he requested me to see, and,

notwithstanding the "tempting" price offered for them, I "turned" them all down.

My reasons for not recommending these instruments were two. The first because, in each case, the organs I saw were all built for Church or Chapel use, religious services, etc., with fine "diapason" tone, but no "colour" in the instrument, and therefore, in my opinion, useless for the accompaniment of the screen-drama, with its many variations from grave to gay. The second reason was because I knew that my principal had the idea in his head that, by installing one of these instruments in his cinemas, he could probably dispense with the wood-wind and brass instrumentalists which I had in the orchestra pits. Apart from being a party to the act of doing my fellow brothers and sisters out of a job, the very instruments which he proposed getting rid of were not to be found in any of the organs I inspected! As anyone who knows anything about organs is aware, an instrument constructed for Church or Chapel use is given a full "diapason" tone, with just an occasional "colour" stop of the wood-wind series, but none of them approaches the actual instrument

for which it is intended. The other obstacle in the way was generally the question of "pitch," the majority of those I saw being "flat-pitch." My orchestras were all "sharp-pitch" for cinema orchestras, for this reason. The majority of cinema orchestras have, at the most, three to four violins. Put them on "flat-pitch" and you take away the brilliancy of tone at once. The "flat-pitch" is all right in a large symphony orchestra, with the full complement of the string quintette and plenty of each. Therefore, had I recommended one of these "flat-pitch" organs, the question of raising the "pitch" of the organ would have been ruled out as impracticable and too costly, so my small orchestras would have had to come down to "flat-pitch." I stood my ground and won in the end, but, as any musician can realise, it was a very hard and heart-breaking task to make men who were *not* musical understand these technical points.

Now to come to present-day cinemas and their organs. We have in this country the finest organ builders in the world, bar none, and amongst their constructional staff the "voicers" in some of these factories are unequalled anywhere. The only complaint that I have against the British organ builder is that he has *not* moved with the times, until after someone else has stepped in and secured the plums. During the war I had many conversations with organ builders, and I endeavoured to impress on them all that the organ would be a great feature in the cinema after we had settled down. Some laughed at me and said, "Pictures have not come to stay, Hutcheson, they are just a craze of the moment, and will fizzle out in the same way as skating rinks did."

These opinions have been proved all wrong. The rinks did fizzle out, and many of them are the cinemas of to-day. Look around you and see the magnificent theatres we have now—The Plaza, The Tivoli, The Capitol, The New Gallery, The Shepherd's Bush Pavilion, The Astoria, all in London; The Majestic in Leeds; The West End and Futurist in Birmingham; The Capitol in Cardiff; The New Picture House in Glasgow, and many others I could name. Here is just one object lesson. In my theatre days it was always considered a "plum" to get a tour around London, because it meant at least twelve to fourteen weeks around the London suburban theatres, with only one lot of "digs" to find, as even in these days, before the advent of motors and tubes, one could always get home by the old horse buses and trams. To-day there are about four of these theatres left where a theatrical company can get a "booking." They are The Borough, Stratford, The Brixton Theatre, The King's, Hammersmith, and The Wimbledon Theatre! Where are all the others gone? The answer is Pictures! Many of them have been reconstructed for cinema purposes and organs installed, and are now very prosperous cinemas, some of them

under the P.C.T. management. If anyone wants to compare the organs of the past (and it is not a very long past either) let him go and hear the instruments at The Marlborough, Holloway, The Coronet, Notting Hill Gate, and The Avenue Pavilion, Shaftesbury Avenue, and compare them with the magnificent instruments in The New Gallery, The Grand, Edgware Road, and The Shepherd's Bush Pavilion.

BRITISH V. AMERICAN PRODUCTIONS.

About two years ago it was announced in the Press that Londoners were to be mystified by the most wonderful organ ever heard. This was the "Wurlitzer" instrument installed at The Plaza. We were informed of the number of pipes, the mileage of piping and tubing, the marvellous "effects," etc., etc. All very good publicity and typical of our friends "across the pond," but when the instrument itself arrived, and a gentleman came specially from U.S.A. to demonstrate the organ, I am not so sure that those who understood were really mystified. The Wurlitzer organs are very good and useful instruments for the purpose for which they are intended, but they are *not* what we have known as "The King of Instruments." As regards construction, tone and workmanship we have better organs in cinemas in this country, but the fact remains that the "Wurlitzer" caught on, and the majority of cinema proprietors, being rather like sheep, followed the lead given at The Plaza, The New Gallery, the P.C.T. at Walsall, and booked their orders with the "Wurlitzer Company." It is here that the British organ builders were slow. For years they had plodded along in the same old rut, refraining from advertising themselves or "pushing their wares," and the Americans came in and secured the plums.

It was only then that the British builders really awakened to the fact that there was a great source of revenue and work for them in the construction of organs for cinemas, and, within the last twelve months, they have pushed ahead.

What made the "Wurlitzer" so popular was not the organ portion itself, but the many "effects" and "gadgets" which they had incorporated in the instrument, and this is where they "took the wind out of the sails" of their British opponents. With an early Victorian attitude the English organ builder said these accessories were a degrading of "The King of Instruments" (perhaps he was right), and would not descend to supply them. However, new ideas *must* be followed if you wish to exist, and, sinking his ideas of desecration, he has now gone all out for organs with effects and accessories.

Regarding the instruments themselves, I shall always vote for British construction, for, apart from any sense of patriotism and love for one's own country, I have *not* yet heard finer wood-wind and brass "voicing" than is to be found in the British made organ.

Compare the wood-wind and brass section of the organs at The Pavilion, Shepherd's Bush; The Grand, Edgware Road, and The Elite, Wimbledon, with those of any "Wurlitzer" in this country, and I am sure any organist will agree with me.

As far as the "effects" and "gadgets" are concerned, the "Wurlitzer" is still "winning by a short head," but I am quite convinced that before very long the British builders will have overcome the one or two defects which still exist in some of their instruments.

The main point is that whatever the organ is—British or American—the instrument must be handled by *an organist*. The man, or the woman, organist must be an organist of experience and must be given plenty of time to master the keyboard of these new types of cinema organs thoroughly. Here are two cases which point the moral.

The Plaza has a "Wurlitzer" instrument. A few weeks ago an organist who plays, and plays very well, at another London cinema on a "Wurlitzer," deputised at the Plaza. Presuming that the organs were identical in type and standard, he never thought it necessary to have a "run-through." Imagine his surprise to find a different set of "combinations," etc., and consequently a very indifferent show by himself. No "Wurlitzer" can be tackled at a moment's notice by any organist, and to ask anyone to do so, however competent a player he may be, is to do him an injustice.

The other case was The Bloomsbury Super Cinema, where a very fine instrument was erected by a well-known British firm. The organ was built for cinema use, with all the latest "effects," etc. A very capable and experienced "straight" organist was engaged to open the organ, and the result was not to the advantage of the instrument or the builders. What he played was played beautifully, but it took the form of a "straight" organ recital, and not *one* of the "effects" installed was ever heard. On the opening night I heard several people say, "Why, it is only an ordinary *Church organ*, not a *Cinema organ*!" Nice compliment for the builders!

RECORDING ON THE ORGAN.

I have recently had the privilege of studying several organ records, and these have only convinced me of the superiority of British organs. In the majority of cases the "action response" is quicker on the British make, the "tone quality" is much purer in the wood-wind and brass, and in some cases the "effects" are quite as good as those on the "Wurlitzer" instrument.

The best records on British instruments which I have heard are:—

1. "Because I love you," by Jack Courtnay.
2. "Drifting and Dreaming," ditto.
3. "In a Monastery Garden," ditto.
4. "Bells across the Meadows." ? (Regal.)
5. "In a Chinese Temple Garden." ? (Regal.)

6. Intermezzo in C (Coleridge-Taylor), by W. Steff-Langston.

7. Hungarian Dance. No. 5. (Brahms). Ditto.

All the above are on a Christie Unit organ at the Elite Super Cinema, Wimbledon.

8. "Poet and Peasant" Overture, by Quentin M. Maclean, at the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion, is an excellent record, and shows off the exquisite "voicing" done by our British builders.

On the "Wurlitzer" instrument I take my hat off to Mr. Jesse Crawford, who is in America, and far away the best recorder of anything I have heard on this firm's organs. Here is a case of a man thoroughly knowing the capabilities of the "Wurlitzer," and certainly showing them to the best advantage.

In this country we have Reginald Foort on the "Wurlitzer" at the New Gallery in Regent Street. His records of "Sanctuary of the Heart," "In a Chinese Temple Garden," and "The Riff Song" and "The Desert Song" from the Drury Lane success are well done, but I do *not* like the *brass* in the New Gallery instrument any more than I do the brass in the Tivoli organ, which is a British organ. In neither instrument are they, in my opinion, to be compared with the clarity of tone to be heard in similar pipes at the Elite, Wimbledon, The Grand, Edgware Road, or The Pavilion, Shepherd's Bush.

I hope my readers will remember that, in offering this criticism of British v. American organs, I am dealing only with organs for cinema use.

As regards "The King of Instruments"—The Organ—this country has all along held the highest honours, which have never been excelled, for supremacy in organ construction. This was the opinion of such masters of the organ as the late Mr. W. T. Best, the late Dr. A. L. Peace, and also M. Guillemant, and many other eminent organists living to-day. What the builders in this country have done in the past with "straight" organs, they can do now, and in the future, with cinema organs.

All they have to do is to study carefully the various requirements of an instrument for accompanying the "silent drama" on the screen and put their shoulder to the wheel, and come out with flying colours. Certainly "Wurlitzer" holds the field at present, not because it is a better organ, but simply because, with the foresight and cuteness of our Yankee friends, they stepped in and took the plums while their opponents in this country were thinking about it.

There is this also to be borne in mind. Many of our Super Cinemas are built, and owned, largely by American money, and in this way the "Wurlitzer" can steal a march on the British maker by getting in first with the news. The whole thing is a question of push and publicity, and our British builders want to brighten their ideas up and move with the times. They have the material of the best and the finest workmen, so why is it they don't get the contracts?

J. MORTON HUTCHESON.

SAVOY OPERA RECORDS

(Continued from June, p. 14)

By N. M. CAMERON

PATIENCE. Produced at the Opéra Comique on April 23rd, 1881, and transferred to the Savoy on October 10th of the same year. It was recorded in full after *The Pirates* and before *Iolanthe*. No Savoyards were in the cast; Derek Oldham had been in *The Yeomen* and *The Pirates* but was absent here, returning for subsequent recordings.

The *Overture* occupies one side only of the first record; all the airs are played, but repetitions are cut. The playing is nice but quiet, by an evidently incomplete orchestra. The opening chorus *Twenty love-sick maidens we* is quite well sung, except that it becomes a little careless and uneven after the solos. Next we have *Patience* herself. Sopranos, at any rate in those days, were always an anxiety on the gramophone, and Sullivan used to give them some difficult tasks, of which this part certainly contains several. *I cannot tell what this love may be* is well and very prettily sung, but with no soul or humour such as Isabel Jay used to put into it. The exigencies of recording deprive us of the contrast between the plaintive strains of the love-sick maidens' chorus, dying away as they go, and the downright vigour of the march to which the Dragoons enter, led obviously by the Quartermaster. *If you want a receipt* is very good; Peter Dawson and the chorus are to be congratulated. The symphony is cut before *In a doleful train* and the girls are too fast, but the men are very good and distinct in a difficult bit. The double chorus is good. Peter Dawson does not sing *When I first put this uniform on* nearly so well as the Colonel's first song. The recitative *Am I alone* fills the remainder of the record, and *If you're anxious for to shine* comes on the next. George Baker misses all the points in the recitative; he sings the song well, but as a concert singer, not a stage artist, missing various points, especially in the last verse. On Col. 2534 one can get the recitative and the song with the middle verse cut; this is one of Walter Passmore's, and is very good. There was evidently not room for the symphony at the end of *Long years ago*, which is followed on the same side by *Prithee, pretty maiden*. Both duets are excellent. One would expect pains to be taken to make a good record of the justly popular *Prithee, pretty maiden*, but it is highly satisfactory to have a good one of the other, which is not only charming but unique of its kind, being Sullivan's only duet for two girls. In *Let the merry cymbals sound* the balance between chorus and

orchestra is very well kept in recording. *Stay, we implore you, etc.*, is good, though the girls are not so good as the men. The sextet *I hear the soft note* is beautifully sung with light and shade. The symphony is cut at the end of the finale.

Silvered is the raven hair is generally considered one of Gilbert's worst lapses from good taste, largely redeemed or concealed by Sullivan's beautiful setting which turns satire into pathos. Edna Thornton's fine voice is well reproduced; the only criticism to be made is that she finishes both verses the same way and also takes liberties in the second verse. *Turn, oh turn in this direction*, a beautiful chorus well sung, immediately precedes *The Magnet and the Churn*. For some unknown reason many airs from Gilbert and Sullivan that were bound to have a ready sale have always been ignored by the recording companies, and there were few I had wanted more than this. It is well recorded, but here again we have the complaint so frequently made already and so frequently to be repeated: Ranalow has a charming voice but is not a Savoyard. Incidentally, there is no direction in the score for Grosvenor to join in the last chorus. Similarly *Love is a plaintive song* is well sung by Violet Essex—but not by *Patience*. The symphony is cut at the end of this, also at the beginning, between the verses, and at the end of *So go to him and say to him*, which gets a milk-and-water rendering and one mistake in words, George Baker singing "Booh to you" instead of the ironical compliment "Hey to you." *It's clear that mediæval art* is accurate, which is just what is wanted, as one cannot see but can imagine the three converts, and *If Saphir I choose to marry* is as good as one could wish. There is no differentiation here between Bunthorne and Grosvenor in their duet *When I go out of door*. There exists an alternative, by Walter Passmore and Robert Howe on the other side of Col. 2534; they take it rather slowly, and their rendering is interesting without being particularly good.

The whole set suffers from the singers not being Savoyards. It is well sung throughout but seldom with special distinction. There are no alternative records except the one already mentioned. Columbia have a 12 in. d.s. orchestral selection and also a single side with *The Gondoliers* on the reverse, and a 10 in. d.s. by a band. Other band selections are: 12 in. d.s. H.M.V. and V.F.; 12 in. s.s. Voc. (*Iolanthe* on reverse); 10 in. d.s. Beltona, Regal, Imperial and Winner.

IOLANTHE. Produced at the Savoy, November 25th, 1882. The *Overture*, one of Sullivan's very best, is badly cut. It is really long enough to cover both sides of the record. Nor does there seem to be a full orchestra present. The opening chorus, however, is nice, both chorus and soloists. The scene with Iolanthe follows. Here the Queen is sometimes not quite in the middle of her note, the alto chorus is weak, especially on "pardoned," and the orchestra is used merely as an accompaniment, not as a most important integral part of the opera as the composer intended. The chorus is absent from Strephon's *Good morrow, good mother*, though present in *Fare thee well, attractive stranger*, where both soloist and chorus do well, and there is no duet at the end of Phyllis's *Good morrow, good lover*. Half of the beautiful symphony before *None shall part us* is cut, and one of the loveliest duets in all the operas is spoilt by haste. The version by Noel Eadie and Cavan O'Connor, though not perfect, is at any rate complete, and is neither scamped nor hurried. We know that the *Chorus of Peers* is sung by seven men; this fact is betrayed by their names being given. It is not at all bad, however, but there is not enough brass in the orchestra. Half the symphony is cut. There was an old H.M.V. record of this, but I never heard it. The Lord Chancellor sings correctly though without expression, but Derek Oldham as Lord Tolloller is perfect when he comes in with *Of all the young ladies I know*. He sings, or was compelled to sing, *Spurn not the nobly born* much too fast; it is marked *andante*. 'Neath this blow, etc., is sung by men who know the music thoroughly. In *When I went to the bar* we get a very good performance from George Baker, who has to sing in 6-8 time against 2-4. The same may be said of Buckley. Voc. X.9945 gives us a very useful pair. *When darkly looms the day* is shorn of eight bars of symphony and the chorus is cut, but otherwise the quartet is good. The music of the Lord Chancellor's entrance is omitted, and his enquiry *What means this mirth unseemly* is pointless, as the recorded mirth had not been at all unseemly. *For riches and rank* is very well given, though with several small cuts. *To say she is his mother* ought, strictly speaking, to begin in a whisper, but the *accelerando* is worked up very well. *Go away madam, etc.*, is very good, especially the Queen and the men's chorus. The speech *Every bill and every measure* can hardly be called a successful piece of recording, but subsequently the whole chorus is very good, especially the men. In fact the peers' chorus is excellent all through the finale, but unfortunately is often cut. The symphony at the end is given, including the two characteristic semi-quavers.

A single side contains the *Sentry's song* and Strephon's *a Member of Parliament*, but omits the introduction to Act II and the symphony before the second item. The *Sentry's song* is quite well sung

by Radford, but the other is perfunctory. *When Britain really ruled the waves* is sung by Peter Dawson, not by Darrell Fancourt, with whom he shares the part of the Earl of Mountararat. He records well, but his rendering is unenlightened. The top E on "glorious" at the end of the third verse is usually sung on the stage but is not in the score, nor is the *rallentando* at the end of the solo of the third verse. *In vain to us you plead* is very pretty, the accompaniment coming out well. *Oh, foolish jay* should be *andante*, but is taken too fast; much expression is thus lost, and there is no pathos. The symphony is cut at the end. *In friendship's name* is unsatisfactory, the worst sung of all the numbers. There was an old H.M.V. record of this which used to give me pleasure, but unfortunately I no longer have it for comparison. The *Dream Song* is not very successful and the accompaniment suffers from lack of instruments. Passmore is infinitely better, and so is his orchestra, though not all the effects are there. *If you go in* is excellent, sung by two Savoyards, Fancourt and Oldham, and George Baker, whose fine voice is an asset. They make one mistake: after the Lord Chancellor's verse, "Nothing venture" the first time should be sung *pianissimo*. *If we're weak enough to tarry* is good, too, and although both of these are on the same side, there are no cuts. *My Lord, a suppliant* is hurried and there are some small cuts, but Nellie Walker sings with feeling. There remains only the brief *finale*.

The men's chorus is first-rate throughout and the best of the bunch, while the alto chorus is the worst. The directors have been at fault in cutting and spoiling *None shall part us*, hurrying *Spurn not the nobly born* and *Oh, foolish jay*, in which it is, for instance, impossible to make it clear that "resemble I the amorous dove?" is a question, and cutting various odd pieces of chorus and symphony, with one especial major crime—the mutilation of the overture.

Alternatives:—

None shall part us: Mme. Jones-Hudson and Peter Dawson, Zono. 1025 (see *Pirates* for reverse); Noel Eadie and Cavan O'Connor, Voc. X.9945.

When I went to the Bar: Stanley Kirkby, V.F. 1066; John Buckley, Voc. X.9945.

Sentry's Song: Howett Worster, Voc. X.9874; Norman Williams, V.F. 1080; Robert Howe, Parlo. E.10093; Harry Dearth, H.M.V. D.215.

When Britain really ruled the waves: Howett Worster, Voc. X.9874; Norman Williams, V.F. 1080.

Oh, foolish jay: Annie Coxon, Voc. X.9946.

Dream Song: Walter Passmore, Col. 354 (see *Yeomen* for reverse). Now withdrawn.

If you go in: O'Connor, Thorne and Buckley, Voc. X.9946 (labelled *He who shies*).

Selections.—Orchestra: 12 in. d.s., Col., V.F. Band: 12 in. d.s., Parlo; 12 in. s.s., Voc., Zono. (*Pirates* on reverse); 10 in. d.s., Aco, Winner, Beltona, Col. "Vocal Gems"—12 in. d.s., Zono.

PRINCESS IDA. Produced at the Savoy, January 5th, 1884. It is curious how people differ in their preferences and opinions. *The Pirates*, for instance, I have known described by one person as the weakest of the series and by another as his favourite. I cannot say myself which is my favourite, but I have always been especially fond of *Princess Ida*, and as there was not a single extract from it recorded, I had looked forward eagerly as well as anxiously to its publication. The evening on which we listened to this set was, I think, the one I enjoyed most of all. Besides my collaborator, who had played Cyril, we also had present his Hilarion; what these two did not know of the opera and all points and details pertinent to its performance did not amount to much.

The *Introduction* is complete, but whether it is the orchestra or the recording that is at fault, this is not a satisfactory record. In any case the *Introduction* is a disappointing piece of work, which is surprising when the opera contains so many lovely airs. Of the other side, the *Opening Chorus* and *Now hearken to my strict command*, there is nothing particular to say, except that the chorus is not nearly heavy enough; it sounds like a quartet. *Ida was a twelve-month old* is a terrible song to sing. (My informant ought to know!) Derek Oldham gives us here a very good rendering even though he does not sing it quite so well as he did at the Princes. In *We are warriors three*, soloist and trio, Darrell Fancourt, Leonard Hubbard and Edward Halland, are very good; again the chorus has not enough body. It was a great pleasure to find Lytton recording a Gilbert and Sullivan part, and he is very good indeed in *If you give me your attention*. The exquisite trio *Expressive glances* is charmingly sung, with the chorus good, though Cyril is a trifle hard. But Florian shows excellent taste and restraint. The only complaint against the remainder of this concluding portion of Act I is that Sheffield takes liberties with the time of *For a month to dwell*.

The *Opening chorus* of Act II, *Towards the Emyrean heights*, is very charming, though the girls are weak in the first chorus. They are, however, stronger in the last. *Mighty maiden* is lamentably weak, the alto lead almost inaudible; it sounds as if only four girls were singing. There are one or two inaccuracies, too. Winifred Lawson is very good in the Princess's air *Oh goddess wise*. By some criminal act of pruning, we were deprived, at the first Princes season and subsequently, of Lady Blanche's exposition of her philosophy, *Come mighty must*. Fortunately it is restored here, a fine record. Next, three men's trios in quick succession. *Gently, gently* and *They intend to send a wire to the moon* are on one side; Cyril is certainly not the equal of Hilarion, but both numbers are very nice, with the orchestra good. *I am a maiden cold and stately* is very good, too, though all the men pay scant attention to a dotted note. This trio surely has engaging qualities com-

parable to the trio in *Iolanthe*, yet no company had hitherto taken any notice of it for recording purposes. *The world is but a broken toy* lacks a few bars of its symphony at the end. It is exquisitely rendered, though not perfect. Cyril uses *falsestto* at the beginning and is not sufficiently sympathetic in the trio immediately after Florian's lead "unreal its loveliest hue." *A lady fair, of lineage high* is a delightful song with a jolly accompaniment, very well sung, and we have nothing but praise for *The woman of the wisest wit* and *Now, wouldn't you like to rule the roost?* In *Merrily ring the luncheon bell* the girls are very weak (doubtless cowed by Lady Blanche) but the soloists are good and the orchestra especially so. *Would you know the kind of maid* deserves high praise; Leo Darnton rises to the occasion in this song. Here again the companies have shown a lack of enterprise, in the case of a song that, having no chorus, should be a welcome gift to them. The finale of *Oh! joy, our chief is saved* is well done, but the second verse of Hilarion's solo is cut as at the Princes. In the ensemble following *Madam, without the castle walls* the men are good but the girls are too weak to keep the balance. Another fault is that Sheffield again takes liberties with the time. The three brothers are perfectly delightful. The *Finale* is well sung, but as before there are too few singers.

Act III begins with a chorus *Death to the invader*, to which are restored some portions that I have never heard, even in performances previous to the season at the Princes at which so much mutilation took place. The alteration in the order of the numbers in this act was, I believe, sanctioned by Gilbert, and is accepted on the stage now. Lytton again is splendid, and Winifred Lawson's singing of *I built upon a rock* is very good. The four-part men's chorus, *When anger spreads his wing*, and *This helmet, I suppose*, are first-rate, after which there is only the finale.

Taken all round the performance is very good; largely because this opera was the last recorded and because it had a complete D'Oyly Carte cast. One serious weakness, however, has been mentioned more than once, the girls' chorus. Of the principals, Sheffield seems bored with his part, and Leo Darnton is splendid in one song but somehow does not please one in the remainder of Cyril's part. The tenors are cast here as at the Princes in 1921, a great improvement on the former practice, which was to allot Cyril to the chief tenor and Hilarion to one of the type that soon drifted into what one D'Oyly Carte manager used to call the *refugium peccatorum*, i.e., grand opera. Lytton and the rest, both men and women, are all excellent.

There exist the following *Selections*: Orchestra, 12 in. d.s., Columbia; 12 in. s.s., H.M.V. (on back of *The Gondoliers* overture). Band, 12 in. d.s., Voc., H.M.V.; 10 in. d.s., Aco, Winner, Beltona, Columbia.

(To be continued.)

UNRECORDED CHAMBER MUSIC—IV

By WILLIAM MEADMORE

WILLIAM Hurlstone died at the early age of 30. Nevertheless he occupies an important position in English music. It was as if he stood on the threshold of the renaissance of English chamber music. His hand on the latch, he died on the very day when the first performance was being given of his Quartet in A minor which had gained the first prize in a competition for British string quartets organised by Mr. W. W. Cobbett. His aim was to reproduce the spirit of British music with modern resources. If he did not succeed in quite freeing himself from the influence of Dvorák (among others) he at least gave great impetus to the new movement, and he certainly broke much new ground. The A minor Quartet occupies 27 minutes, and is full of colour and strongly marked melodies. It is a significant work for the gramophonist, as it does in a very charming manner prepare the way for much that is new and strange in modern quartet writing. The work opens significantly with an impressive unison passage for strings which develops into a broad and tuneful theme. The *Andante* consists of a simple melody of irresistible charm. The third movement makes an immediate appeal to the ear. Ushered in by a pizzicato passage, this merges into a boisterous rollicking measure, which, however, is interrupted by a tranquil interlude reminiscent of a haunting folk song. This soon gives way to the jollity of the opening theme. The *Finale* commences by a repetition of the solemn theme of the first movement, this time played *lento*, but this soon gives way to an *Allegro* marked on the score "*giocoso*." No music could be more joyous, a swan song that any composer would be proud to have written.

Borodine, the composer of "Prince Igor," wrote two string quartets, of which the first in A is an unusual, if lengthy, work (36 minutes). In it are well displayed the individual qualities of the composer's melody even when influenced by folk song, his rich harmonies, and also his remarkably apt polyphonic combinations of melodies. This is particularly noticeable in the *Andante con moto*. The *Scherzo* is perhaps the best movement of this quartet, and is full of animation and rhythmical surprises. Ending abruptly, it is followed by a curious *Trio* which enters with harmonics; the two middle instruments being muted whilst the first violin and 'cello play the subject in harmonics, the effect being (with the aid of a little imagination!) that of a sleigh driving through snow with pealing bells. The last movement is typical of the composer and essentially Russian in rhythm and character.

It is somewhat surprising that Grieg only wrote one complete string quartet. It is in G minor and dedicated to the composer's friend, Herr Robert Heckmann, who was the leader of the once famous Heckmann Quartet. The quartet is cast on the classical model, but, if there is little to comment on, there is much to enjoy. It was written whilst the composer was living at Lofthus, in Hardanger, and is partly built upon a theme found in the first song of Op. 25. It is one of the most expressive of Grieg's compositions, and should certainly be recorded. It takes 35 minutes in performance, and could thus be fitted on to four records.

Another fine work of the British school is E. J. Moeran's Quartet in A minor. Its brevity (22 minutes) is, of course, a commendation for the Gramophone Companies. His earliest efforts in composition were in the chamber music genre, and the A minor is the fourth of his string quartets. Written in 1921-22 (the composer then being 28), the Quartet is dedicated to Désiré Defauw, the well-known Belgian violinist who frequently leads quartets at South Place. Moeran has lived the greater part of his life at Bacton, a small village on the Norfolk coast, where he has enthusiastically collected folk songs, some of which were published in the Folk Song Society's Journal in 1922. The Quartet is obviously and pleasantly informed by these, particularly in the *Andante*, where there is a theme of fascinating charm. A characteristic use of two melodies running simultaneously is employed in the first movement.

On looking through these notes I find that when discussing Piano Quintets I omitted any reference to the Novak Quintet in A minor, Op. 12, a work which always greatly impresses me, and which is unfortunately little known in this country, although it is in the repertoire of the Bohemian Quartet. Vitezslav Novak was born in Bohemia in 1870, and now lives in Prague. His earlier compositions, influenced by Brahms and Dvorák, are energetic and passionate, and although the Piano Quintet undoubtedly has these qualities, there are also signs of the deeper nationalistic feelings which mark the composer's development. There is much of folk-lore influence and there are quick changes from sadness to wild joy. The second movement consists of an air and variations, the theme being an old Bohemian "minnilied." These variations are indeed delightful and well show the composer's originality and fertility in writing for the chamber music ensemble. The Quintet takes some 28 minutes to perform.

(To be continued.)

Analytical Notes and First Reviews

[NOTE.—The prices given refer only to the United Kingdom.]



INSTRUMENTAL

The very modest proportions of this month's instrumental list are due in part, no doubt, to the time of year. Possibly, too, the companies have not yet completely recovered from the effects of their Herculean labours in connection with the Beethoven Centenary. Of chamber music they give us, for the second month in succession, none at all—for the same reason, I suppose.

VIOLIN.

Erica Morini (Brunswick, 80011, 12in., 6s. 6d.) deserves more than the mere word of praise which is all I have space to give her for keeping so exactly in tune throughout two pieces that abound in double stopping and other snares. Her tone, too, is round and pleasant, worthy of better things than *Forsaken* (Koschelt-Winternitz), which is nearly, though not quite, as musically nil as its title leads one to forebode. Nachez's *Danses Tziganes* are fireworks of a rather fussy kind, but the difficulties are certainly surmounted with splendid ease.

The performance of Wieniawski's *Scherzo-Tarantelle* by **Zacharewitsch** on Velvet-Face 716 (12in., 4s.) is rather disappointing, the rhythm being deficient in firmness, and the intonation not always above reproach. Both these blemishes disappear in his other number, *Love and Sorrow* (a composition of his own), but the music here is of the very sentimental kind which I do not much like. The disc has the advantage of a very smooth surface—and how enormously the recording of piano accompaniments to violin solos has improved in the past year or two!

'CELLO.

Saint-Saëns' *Swan* (*Le Cygne*) is like the phoenix, singing his swan-song (and presumably dying) regularly every month, only to rise from his ashes four weeks later and go through the whole performance again. His present incarnation ends very elegantly under the bow of **Felix Salmond** (Columbia L.1958, 12in., 6s. 6d.), who treats him with both respect and tenderness. The casual listener might well imagine that this was really the end of him; but we gramophiles know better. Salmond's other piece is—can anyone guess?—the *Londonderry Air*. Of this he gives a rather perfunctory rendering, neither his tone nor his interpretation being anything like so good as what he provides in *Le Cygne*. Perhaps he was not altogether satisfied with the arrangement (O'Connor Morris's). If so, he has my sympathy, but it is not an easy tune to arrange satisfactorily.

An expressive but unsentimental performance of *Träumerei* (Schumann) such as **Emanuel Feuermann** gives us on Parlophone 10594 (12in., 4s. 6d.) is something of a novelty, and if only he had played it just a little faster he would have satisfied me completely. Saint-Saëns' *Allegro Appassionata* on the other side is agreeable, well-made music, not very profound. Both pieces are well recorded with that soft but mellow tone characteristic of Parlophone.

Tambourin Napolitana (Gocelli-Van Lier) is bright,

vivacious stuff, and **Jacques Van Lier**, aided by some good recording, gets the best out of it (Vocalion K.05311, 12in., 4s. 6d.). His other piece, *Serenade Russe* (Krein) has some unexpected developments, but I have an idea that the fundamental thought is rather commonplace none the less. Still, it is well played.

PIANO.

Mark Hambourg's playing of Percy Grainger's *Handkerchief Dance* (H.M.V., B.2478, 10in., 3s.) sounds sweet and delicate as here recorded, and is not unreasonably fast. The same virtues are apparent in Wolf-Ferrari's *Intermezzo in G*; but this piece, which comes actually from *The Jewels of the Madonna*, is not completely successful in the piano arrangement, leaving a good deal to be supplied by the imagination. The effect might have been better if Hambourg had had the assistance of Segovia, the guitarist, whose record is reviewed below.

It is quite possible to play **Sapellnikoff's** record (Vocalion A.0268, 12in., 5s. 6d.) of the *Grand March* from *Tannhäuser* (Wagner-Liszt) with a loud needle, but I find a medium one more agreeable in my small room. The recording is distinctly good, but nothing—not even Sapellnikoff's playing—can prevent the March from sounding rather tawdry in its Lisztian finery. These pianistic effects were new when Liszt wrote them; now they are everybody's stock-in-trade, and they are hardly able to stand the strain of everyday wear.

The Schubert *Impromptu in A flat* (Op. 90, No. 4) played by **Rachmaninoff** (H.M.V., DB.1016, 12in., 8s. 6d.) is not the one recorded last month by Paderevski, but another, hardly less familiar, starting in the minor with descending *arpeggi*. The performance is clear and full of imaginative touches, but I am bound to say it does not move me very much; a suggestion of "tinniness" in one or two of the loud chords as here recorded may have something to do with this lack of charm. In the *Sarabande* from Bach's *Partita in D* (No. 4)—a work which we shall some day have in its entirety, I hope—there is the same clarity, the same complete technical control, but also a certain abruptness which hardly suits the style of Bach, especially in a *Sarabande*. But having had my grumble may I urge everybody to hear the record? The Bach has not been previously done for the gramophone, it is delightful music, and here it is rendered by a master whom we must respect, even if we disagree with him.

ORGAN.

A *Prelude and Fugue in G minor* played by **Dupré** on H.M.V. E.454 (10in., 4s. 6d.) is interesting for several reasons. In the first place there is the music itself, a *Prelude* that is full of ideas, modern without being outrageous, followed by a *Fugue* which is far from dull, though the writing is a little too thick and intricate, perhaps, to be quite ideal. Secondly, there is the performance; composers are seldom good advocates of their own compositions, but Dupré is an exception and his neat technique and clever registration in the *Prelude* command my unreserved admiration. The *Fugue* does not come off so well; indeed, when I first heard it on the instrument of the London Editor in his office I could make very little of it. On my own H.M.V. machine at home (with a No. 4 sound-box) it sounded rather better, but the part-writing was still far from clear. It is the old story; the organ is not built for quick music and fast passages are apt to come out confused, especially if the part-writing is at all elaborate. Even Dupré and the H.M.V. experts cannot quite achieve what is, in fact, impossible.

The *Allegro Vivace* with which Widor opens his *Fifth Symphony* for organ is not an easy piece to make convincing. A set of variations of somewhat unequal quality, it presents

the player with several technical problems, the chief of them being, perhaps, the difficulty of making the very high notes which the composer has written for the instrument effective without being shrill. I congratulate **G. D. Cunningham** (H.M.V., C.1336, 12in., 4s. 6d.) therefore upon the accuracy of his performance, the skill of his registration, and especially on his avoidance of squeakiness. This last virtue has, however, only been achieved at a cost, for there are times when it is hard to follow exactly what is going on, and the organist has had to refrain from using the full power of his instrument even in the passages marked *fff*. But I doubt if the movement ever sounds perfectly clear even in a church or concert hall, so I am not inclined to blame either performance or reproduction, knowing how pleased I should be if I could make the music sound half as well as it does on this record.

Dr. W. G. Alcock's record (H.M.V., B.2466, 10in., 3s.) I heartily recommend to those whose music room is not too large and who enjoy the organ in an intimate mood. Neither of his own composition *Toccata* nor *Canzona* (Guilmant) is the least sensational, but both are full of charm and the playing exactly suits them—restrained but always interesting. The registration is especially admirable in its moderation and variety. The organ used is Dr. Alcock's own instrument in Salisbury Cathedral and has some singularly beautiful soft solo stops. The recording is excellent, though there is inevitably a slight lack of definition in parts of the flowing *Toccata*.

GUITAR.

Andrés Segovia (H.M.V., D.1255, 12in., 6s. 6d.) provides us with some truly astonishing playing on the guitar, an instrument which, by the way, appears to record excellently. His rendering of a Bach *Gavotte* is pleasantly rhythmic and the *rubato*, though meretricious, is effective. But the result, interesting as it is, is hardly Bach, and the guitar seems more naturally suited to the pleasant, childish prattling of a *Thème Varié* by Sor, which is most successful. The playing is, of course, the main thing, and this no one should miss.

P. L.



ORCHESTRAL

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254 (12in., five records in album, 32s. 6d.). **Royal Albert Hall Orchestra**, conducted by Ronald: "New World" Symphony (Dvorák).

D.1249 (12in., 6s. 6d.). **State Opera Orchestra, Berlin**, conducted by Dr. L. Blech: Overture to "Der Freischütz" (Weber).

The first movement of the symphony takes two sides, the second three, the third two, and the last three. The sides cover the following pages of the miniature score of Eulenburg: Side 1, to page 22, bar 5; side 2, to end of movement; side 3, to page 59, bar 4; side 4, to page 65, bar 2; side 5, to end of slow movement; side 6, end of page 90; side 7, to end of Scherzo; side 8, to page 125, bar 4; side 9, to page 145, end of bar 1; side 10, to end of work.

Here comes an old favourite, seemingly clad and beaming all over. What can we do but welcome him with as gay a smile, and praise his merits heartily? even if, with the critic's conscientiousness, we recognise his little weaknesses, and mention them—simply because we are set in this world to see a thing honestly and see it whole. The *New World* is a very old world of music to us now, happily. On its title hinges a point of

interest. It is fairly clear now that there is much less of the new than of the old world in it. True, Dvorák, living in America then, was convinced that he could see in negro tunes the foundation of the country's future music, of "a serious and original school of composition," as he put it. These tunes, "the product of the soil," were, he declared, American. "They are the folk songs of America." Only by using them could American composers express the true sentiments of the American people—"get into touch with the common humanity." In the negro tunes Dvorák discovered, he believed, all that was needed for a great and noble school of music. "They are pathetic, tender, passionate, melancholy, solemn, religious, bold, merry, gay, gracious, or what you will . . . There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot find a thematic source here."

So he put a negro tincture into several works, and all was well; but who of any significance has followed in his train? What great—really great—modern music has its roots deeply in folk song, of the negro or anyone else? And was Dvorák using the negro tunes in a particularly useful way? Some of them are delicious, of course. The second theme of the first movement is as gracious and tenderly childlike a fragment as we can find (it comes, pretty clearly, from "Swing low, sweet chariot"). Does not the symphony speak rather of homesickness—of Bohemia rather than America? Countrymen of Dvorák declare it does. I feel it so. We need not stay to wonder if the negro's tunes are really his own, in the sense that the folk tunes of Britain are our people's own. It seems very much more likely that the melodies derive more from mission hymns and popular ditties than from racial sources, and scarcely at all from African roots, which ought to be the strongest. The negro, we remember, was a wanderer, far from his home. All his songs tell us of his narrow interests, and his hopes in this life and the next. Compare any score of the negro's "spirituals," or his songs of other kinds, with a score of British folk pieces—words and music. There is the greatest possible difference. Just as the sailor's shanties contained bits of hymns, of music-hall tunes, of airs from all over the world, gathered in his wanderings, so, in their smaller corner, the negro's songs are stamped with all kinds of devices entirely different from the well-marked stamps of the world's genuine folk music—using the word genuine as meaning something indigenous and perfectly original, as far as any nation can from its own mind and heart produce anything original.

Dvorák was a musician, not a philosopher. The two scarcely ever meet in one man. Give me the composer of spirit, initiative and force, full of himself and the moods of life, and absolutely not to be prevented from spilling over with things to say and do, and the philosopher runs a poor second in my esteem—at the moment. We delight in Dvorák's perpetual "unbuttonedness," even if we wish he had oftener woven his material less loosely and with more pains. He frequently sprawls, but he so obviously loves to sprawl that we are no more annoyed than we are at the luxurious enjoyment of life of a kitten. He plays the gayest pranks, and we cheer him on. His interminable codas would bore us if we hadn't such interest in wondering what the astonishing fellow will do next, and how long he thinks he can hold out. Without the prolixity and diffuseness of some of his movements he wouldn't be really himself. He is of a piece, and you must take him or leave him: no half measures here; and who ever wanted to take any with him? Not a musician but has a special corner in his affections for Dvorák, who seems to me a sort of Peter Pan of composition. Not that he didn't learn his business (in rather odd ways, of course): no man who hasn't gone through the mill in some style or other will make good in music; but Dvorák made his own mill, and was miller, miller's man, machinery, grain, cat and all. It worked, with him, but of course it is a dangerous game, that few can play with success. He died nearly a quarter of a century ago. Where is his later parallel?

The symphony has been done before, by the same Company.

Now we get something infinitely more interesting. The music depends a good deal on colour. Colour is here in abundance, and with some of the right sheen upon it. The bits of wood-wind, for instance, in the first movement, and more particularly in the second, come out with a grace and lissomeness that I like very much, though I still think another orchestra could give us a finer delicacy. The soft playing disappoints me. Is it not possible to get a real *pianissimo*? The strings in the middle section of the slow movement are much too bold. This is a real defect. The tone of the strings has improved. There is greater roundness and truth in them. The wood-wind, always a rather touchy department in this slow movement, does not err on the side of gentleness, but achieves safety and so gives satisfaction. The Scherzo lacks a trifle, in the playing, that *furious* spirit that is a valued tincture in several works of Dvorák. The Trio is *very* un-American, by the way. Here is a bit of the composer's homely music. The last movement seems to me perhaps the most successful of all, in this recording. The way the strings hold their own, and the sense of their power, is attractive and convincing. This movement is almost too naive, I feel. For a good sample of Dvorák's use at times of (apparently) whatever came into his head, listen to the last couple of dozen bars of side eight. One cannot escape this feeling, and it is one that points out the most serious of the composer's weaknesses. As a violent contrast in the use of logic in a symphonic work, those who care to take the trouble can find much of interest in comparing this work with Elgar's second. Each has its own native beauties, but on the single point of the logical development of material you can see the difference not only between the Slav and the Briton, but, essentially, between the two brain-capacities. (Note, by the way, the odd little anticipation of Elgar—both, of course, recollecting still another—in Dvorák's key-shiftings on page 142, thirty bars before the end of side nine.)

I like the recording. It gets the scale of the music, and only seems to me to droop a little in the matter of flexibility and in the right portrayal of the finest shades of tone. In almost all other respects it does ample justice to the lovable work.

Though the *Freischütz* performance is admirably vivid, the string tone is not so lifelike as in the symphony. There is a better *pp* and a rather more sensitive use of tonal shading. The balance is good, the brass not overpowering the strings, as often happens in this overture.

PARLOPHONE.

E.10586 (12in., 4s. 6d.). State Opera House Orchestra, conducted by E. Moerike; *Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine* from *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner).

E.10587 (12in., 4s. 6d.). State Opera House Orchestra, conducted by E. Moerike; *Fantasia on Wagner's "Lohengrin."*

E.10588 (12in., 4s. 6d.). State Opera House Orchestra, conducted by G. Szell; *Overture to The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Nicolai).

E.10589 (12in., 4s. 6d.). Grand Symphony Orchestra; *Overture to Light Cavalry* (Suppé).

The *Journey* is of course cut short. It starts at page 64⁷ bar 6, of the full score (Universal Edition), goes to page 70, bar 4, and then cuts to page 144, bar 3, ending (with a few bars of added coda) at the conclusion of the "Vorspiel" (page 198). Surface noise on my copy rather interferes with my enjoyment. The strings please me best; they are purer than in the H.M.V. German record of the Weber overture. The sweep and sway of joyous youth is suggested to the mind by the brilliant music of the last thirty pages of this great extract.

Has it ever been better done; and has a little material ever been more easily handled in development? Wagner, supremely, is the man for ease and power, every time.

I do not quite feel that the brass and other wind comes up to the strings in this record. It is the sensibility of the playing that attracts me most.

I don't know whose work the *Lohengrin Fantasia* is. It is put together so as to give a good idea of some of the work's best bits. The playing is bright, clean and well balanced. The brass in particular blends and supports well.

Might not Nicolai's *Merry Wives* be worth reviving? It is nearly half a century since the Carl Rosa Company produced it here in English. It is not, I think, in their present repertory. The overture is such a happy piece of work that the rest of the opera (which I'm sorry I have never heard) should be worth looking at again. Nicolai had had good success with a number of operas before this, and it was sad that he did not live to enjoy its success, for he died of apoplexy a couple of months after its first production in Berlin, in 1849. This recording of the overture is the best I have heard—piquant, smooth and debonair. The orchestra slips through it in the pleasantest possible fashion, and every note is sweetly produced.

That is an uncommonly resonant trumpet-call at the start of Suppé's Overture. I do not know what the "Grand Symphony Orchestra" is. Nearly all of it is as good as the brass. It seems to like this sort of music. Others who do so will like its performance.

BRUNSWICK.

80008 (12in., 6s. 6d.). State Opera Orchestra of Berlin, conducted by R. Heger; *German Dances*, Nos. 1-10 (Schubert).

80009 (12in., 6s. 6d.). State Opera Orchestra of Berlin, conducted by Strauss; *Rose Cavalier Waltz* (Strauss).

The charming little dances of Schubert could not be better done than in this performance. They are of the homely waltz type, akin to that of the *Ländler*. Here and there is a touch of musicianly sophistication, and of preoccupation for an instant with something of fuller life than the people's dances can ever be. The playing pleases me very much by its clarity, the adequacy of its wind work, and the balance of the parts. The phrasing can be pleasantly felt, and the best is made of the music, without imposing any sort of concert interpretation upon it. The players give the right feeling of jogging on, without boring you. Even the smallest things of Schubert, considered in bulk, show an astonishing amount of resource and variety. He could take ideas from the folk, and treat their music, without becoming precious about it, or attempting to make the simple tunes fit a too ambitious scheme. He and Haydn were the outstanding successes in this, but while Haydn used the tunes all up and down his instrumental works Schubert rarely allowed them to colour his pieces so strongly as did his predecessor.

We have already had Strauss's interpretation of his waltz. No one can do it quite so well—at exactly the right pace, with precisely the right delightful balance of emphasis and shading of tone. He is as adroit as ever in this performance. I do not quite feel that the strings are perfectly happy in the opening; and some of the wind work is the least trifle shrill, as I hear it from the particular combination I am using. The general swirl and lusciousness of the music are well conveyed, however. Neatly phrased and happily pulsing, the music convinces us again that the opera from which it comes is one of the nattiest masterpieces in its kind. It is a thousand pities that we have not larger slices from the music. I recall few extracts from it. Why should not we have the whole?

K. K.



OPERATIC

MICHELE FLETA (tenor).—*Celeste Aida* from *Aida* (Verdi) and *Una vergine* from *La Favorita* (Donizetti). In Italian. Orch. acc. H.M.V. D.B.1053, 12in., 8s. 6d.

FERNANDO AUTORI (bass).—*Serenata di Mefistofele* from *Faust* (Gounod) and *Ballata del fischio* from *Mefistofele* (Boito). In Italian. Orch. acc. Parlophone R.20020, 12in., 6s. 6d.

SPANI (soprano) and **GRANFORTE** (baritone).—*Decidi il mio destin* and *No, più non m'ami* from *Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo). In Italian. La Scala Orchestra, conducted by Carlo Sabajno. H.M.V. D.B.1046, 12in., 8s. 6d.

LA SCALA CHORUS.—*Inneggiamo al Signor* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni) and, with **ANNA MARIA TURCHETTI** (soprano), *La vergine degli angeli* from *La Forza del Destino* (Verdi). In Italian. H.M.V. B.2445, 10in., 3s.

Michele Fleta.—Previous records by this typical specimen of the modern Italian tenor have elicited favourable comment, and so must the present examples. Personally, I am much less tired of listening to a solo from Donizetti's *La Favorita* than to the eternally celestial *Celeste Aida*. The trouble with a disc is that you cannot halve it with anybody. Otherwise, I would say to my best friend, "You shall take the *Celeste Aida*, which Michele Fleta sings quite excellently, and I will take the *Una vergine, angiol divina*, which he sings better still." Both, I admit, are slightly nasal, but not disagreeably so, and the singing is robust and tender by turns; while the recording is wonderfully clear. Well, as we can't toss for the half, you had better take them both.

Fernando Autori.—When I heard this useful artist at Covent Garden recently, I came to the conclusion that he was reliable in all things—including steadiness and intonation; but somehow I was driven to the conclusion that he does not add distinction of style to the possession of a fine voice. In a word, his methods are those of the good *routinier*. There is a certain amount of Mephistophelean flavour, both in the *Faust* serenade, which everybody knows, and in the boastful *ballata* which the same personage sings in the Brocken scene of Boito's opera. But there is nothing commanding or Chaliapin-like about either; the sardonic touch is not kept up enough. In fact, the sympathetic quality of the voice does not lend itself effectively to the music, despite the effort of the singer to make it do so. The laughs sound forced, and the extra one at the end could have been dispensed with, while the whistle after each verse would not suffice to start a train, much less attract the notice of a policeman.

Spani and Granforte.—The duet between Nedda and Silvio from the first act of *Pagliacci* is here given complete in two parts. It is, on the whole, remarkably well done. The soprano is not the exceptional artist that the baritone is; but from Italy at the present epoch that would have been too much to expect. Anyhow, her voice is adequate and she puts energy into her singing at the right moments. Granforte's is a really beautiful organ, with splendid compass and power, and a timbre that reminds me singularly of that great artist Cotogni, who shared the chief baritone parts with Faure or Graziani at Covent Garden years ago. It sounds young, fresh, resonant, and firm as a rock. Granforte does most of the work in the first record and throws abundant passion into Silvio's pleading. The Scala Orchestra brings out with praiseworthy clearness and finish the familiar features of Leoncavallo's scoring, the balance with the voices being quite irreproachable. The individuality of the different timbres is indeed marvellously depicted. When all unite towards the

end in a strenuous outburst, the musical effect is splendid—a wonderful reproduction of a familiar portion of this opera that has never before been adequately recorded.

La Scala Chorus.—The first thing that strikes me about these records of ensembles from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *La Forza del Destino* is the surprising quantity of music which they concentrate within the limits of a 10in. disc. (price 3s.). It is indeed what the auctioneers, in their own elegant jargon, describe as "a cheap lot." And also a good one. If the young lady who represents Santuzza and Donna Leonora only possessed a less "wobbly" voice, the quality of the solo bits might be described as equal in value to the quantity and quality of the other parts. Happily, she has not a great deal to sing. As for the rendering of the choruses, it reaches the very highest level of operatic excellence, being not only distinct and well-defined in execution, but impressively sonorous without any accompanying roughness or approach to shouting. The body of tone in the *Cavalleria* number is not less extraordinary than the steadiness of vocal line preserved in the other, and once more I pay a tribute to the rare merit of the recording.

HERMAN KLEIN.



SONGS

PARLOPHONE.

Lotte Lehmann (with orchestra): *O lass' dich halten, goldene Stunde* (Op. 35, No. 3, Adolf Jensen), and *Berceuse de Jocelyn* (Angels guard thee, Godard). R.20019 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Emmy Bettendorf (soprano) with piano and violin: *Two Wiegenlieder* (Cradle Songs): *Schlafe, mein Prinzchen* (Mozart) and *Guten Abend, gut' Nacht* (Op. 49, No. 4, Brahms). E.10595 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Adolf Jensen was a nineteenth-century Prussian composer (not to be confused with the Dane, N. P. Jensen, nor with his brother Gustav) of whom we hear too little. Grove himself says in his Dictionary that "his genius is essentially that of a song-writer—full of delicate, tender feeling, but with no great heights or depths." Most people who hear *Lotte Lehmann's* record will probably agree with most of this, but hardly with the "but." No more living moonlight-night love-song has ever been written—what's more, fresh though it is, the feeling is not all so merely "tender." It is well to remember, too, when playing this, that Jensen can hardly have had much, if any, acquaintance with the real, later Wagner. The singing of it is glorious. One might perhaps like a little longer phrasing, especially in the early part, and a little more of the great tranquillity indicated by Jensen. I don't know if the orchestration is Jensen's, but it is very effective, and I think worth while. As for the Godard, it is so well done almost to convert the hardest die-hard.

Emmy Bettendorf treats everything she does in an absolutely individual way of her own. It is always an extraordinarily beautiful way, and always seems the natural use of her voice and nature. Some details are questionable in themselves. If her song has a sustained character, she takes it slower than anyone else—the Brahms here, for instance. For another thing, she slurs persistently. Yet it is hard not to forgive everything when the voice, and the singing as a whole, are so exquisite. The Mozart (one of his comparatively few independent songs) is, as sung here, a perfectly finished little miniature.

The Germans, nowadays, seem unable to be satisfied with simple little things just as they are given them. Both these songs are "arranged" by some unknown hand—admittedly with the nicest judgment.

ZONOPHONE.

Madam Telini (soprano), in Welsh, with orchestra. **Welsh Songs** (? all traditional). **Dacw 'Nghariadi** and **Y Cobler du bach**; **Wrth fynd efo Deio i Dywyn** and **Robin ddiog**; **Robin Goch** and **Chwech o Eifr.** 2952-4 (three 10in., 2s. 6d. each).

I haven't the vaguest idea (I'm not proud to say) what Madam Telini is singing about, as far as the words are concerned. ("Madam Telini," by the way, has a very un-Welsh sound, but not so her singing.) But I do know that one may have, for a mere half-crown, one, or for seven-and-six, three, of the most characteristic records in existence. If anyone who knows *Men of Harlech* and *All through the night* imagines he knows all about Welsh song, let him get one of these records. Any one will be enough to give him a shock—and a revelation, too.

As I've said, I don't know Welsh (but have now fresh incentive to learn it), and the music of these six songs is all so worth knowing that I can't recommend any one record specially. I don't know who has arranged these songs, but they seem excellently done, the light orchestral accompaniments being delightfully effective.

VELVET FACE.

Edith Furmedge (contralto) with orchestra: **O rest in the Lord and Woe unto them** (from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*). 1211 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

Morlais Morgan (baritone), with orchestra: **The Floral Dance** (Moss) and **The Fishermen of England** (from *The Rebel Maid*, Phillips). 1212 (10 in., 2s. 6d.).

John Lovering (baritone): **The Village Blacksmith** (Weiss), and **Ailsa Mine** (Newton). 717 (12 in., 4s.).

1211 must be about the best value ever given for half-a-crown. There is really nothing to criticise, except that to get *O rest* on the 10in. disc three cuts (eight bars in all) have had to be made. These are such cuts as may seriously offend people who know by heart every note of the Air, though even they may not be worried by them, and should certainly hear the record. *Edith Furmedge* is at least of the first order.

There are faults in *Morgan's* record (e.g., the familiar bad habit of treating every phrase as a separate song, stopping dead in between each); but I think this is the best half-crown record of the ever-popular *Floral Dance*.

There will surely be a great welcome for *Lovering's* record. Modern recordings of such songs as these two ancestral favourites are few and far between, and any complaints against this performance are hardly worth making.

H.M.V.

Göta Ljungberg (soprano), in Latin: **Panis Angelicus** (César Franck) with 'cello, harp and organ, and **Ave Maria** (J. S. Bach, arr. Gounod) with violin obbligato by Isolde Menges, harp and organ. D.B.962 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

Eric Marshall (baritone): **The Two Grenadiers** (Schumann), and **Hindoo Song** (Bemberg) with piano and 'cello. D.1244 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Rachel Morton (soprano) with orchestra: **Hindoo Song** (from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*) and **Serenade** (Tosti). E.457 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

George Metaxa (tenor): **Mandrulita** (Stefanesca) sung in Roumanian, and **Ideale** (Tosti) in French. B.2495 (10in., 3s.).

Someone has already noticed that Franck is found walking on the heights in his bigger instrumental works rather than in his avowedly religious music. This *Panis Angelicus* is not the Franck we know in, say, the Quartet. It is too much like Gounod's "sacred" songs. Yet it has real feeling, and perhaps a mere passing acquaintance with it is not enough. It could hardly be heard to better advantage than here—nor could

Gounod's maltreatment of Bach. There is all the fine singing one expects from Göta Ljungberg.

Perhaps *Marshall's* version of *The Two Grenadiers* is the best English version there is, because of its general interpretation, and in spite of excessive and unwarrantable freedom—those bad rhythmic habits from which he is certainly not yet free, and which will ruin his work if he isn't very careful. To the Bemberg he gives a dignity which raises it well above the average.

I can't undertake now to compare all existing records of *Rachel Morton's* two songs. But it is safe to say that few of either can be much better, and her voice is very attractive—perhaps a little weak here in depth of character.

One wonders if *Mandrulita* is a Roumanian folk-song. If so, musical banalities of West Europe tend to cheapen it. At any rate, it is decidedly interesting, and one might come to value it highly. *Ideale* is one of the best Tosti songs I know. For voice, *Metaxa* certainly deserves a place in the first ranks of contemporary tenors, and his singing is almost as good as any of its own, modern Italian, style.

VOCALION.

Olga Haley (mezzo-soprano) accompanied by Ivor Newton: **My Life's Delight**, **Fair house of joy**, **Music**, when soft voices die and **In the bud of the morning**, O (Roger Quilter). K.05308 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Clara Serena (contralto) accompanied by Roy Mellish: **Silent Noon** (from D. G. Rossetti's *House of Life*, set by R. Vaughan Williams) and **An Irish Folk-Song** (Foote). K.05309 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Watcyn Watcyns (bass-baritone) with orchestra: **The Admiral's Broom** (Bevan) and **Trooper Johnny Ludlow** (Gordon Temple). K.05307 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Singing such as *Olga Haley's* gives one little to say once one has exhausted one's eulogies. Perhaps *Fair house* is a little spasmodic. And Miss Haley's diction is getting worse instead of better. The songs surely need no recommendation to moderately-high-brows, or to lowest-brows.

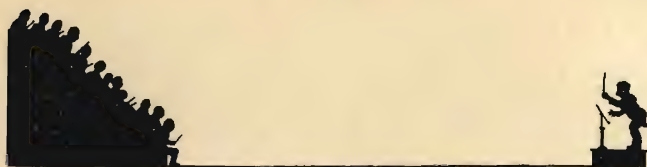
The perfect record of *Silent Noon* would be worth a lot. There is much to be said for *Clara Serena's*. Her voice has a quiet, warm glow which is very acceptable in this song, and she uses it with really good, if none too intense, feeling. I only know one or two other records of the song. Perhaps the best is Norman Allin's (Columbia), unexpectedly good for such a sensitive, velvety song from such a true basso profundo. Still, he is naturally rather hefty. I have always thought this obtrusively a man's song, but perhaps it's not, after all. Anyhow, if I wanted the song on the reverse of either this or Allin's record ("An Irish folk-song" is a misnomer) I should certainly choose according to which I preferred.

Bevan's song is really a very good second to Stanford's blustering sea songs; though it is not quite equal to mingling on good terms with the company to which Stanford introduced such music. *Watcyns* gives it splendidly—also *Trooper Johnny Ludlow*, who is, however, a mere pretentious upstart.

C. M. C.

Film Records

At present the only public place where one can hear a film record without an accompanying film picture is the Kingsway Theatre, where a good deal of the atmosphere of the third and fourth acts of "Marygold" is suggested by the sounds of bugle calls or bagpipes or military bands coming from a distance along the streets of Edinburgh and passing under the balcony of the room in the Castle in which the scene is laid. For a first effort of British Acoustic Films it is a great success, producing effects which could not be done otherwise without vast trouble and expense; but it is the future uses to which the films will be put that chiefly strike the mind of the listener whenever he is able to distract his attention from one of the most charming, well dressed and well cast plays in London.



CHORAL

PARLOPHONE.

The Irmeler Choir with orchestra: *Wie wohl ist mir* (J. S. Bach) and *Sanctus* from Schubert's 5th Mass. E.10596 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

H.M.V.

The Glasgow Orpheus Choir (unaccompanied), conducted by Hugh S. Robertson, Concert at Queen's Hall, London: *The Laird o' Cockpen* (arr. Robertson) and *Dumbarton's Drums* (arr. Bantock). E.456 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

The intonation of the *Irmeler Choir* is still uncertain, and their attack is seldom clean. In fact, they still do not sound as at home in choral work as any noted British choir would (compare the record next reviewed). In the Bach (as always, when they have the chance) they have a little of the excessive emotionalism, come down from 19th century German Romanticism. But there is no denying the beauty. Bach brings a wonderful, soothing peace and beauty over the spirit, as he nearly always does when not being exultant or gay. This seems to be an original Chorale from his *Notenbüchlein*. As the *Irmeler Choir* are doing much choral Bach, I had better say now, that it is often impossible for me to trace these things on the spur of the moment, and that if anyone can help you it will be Breitkopf and Härtel's English agents (Feldman).

Mozart and Schubert both came within a long period of German music whose chief qualities are more or less antagonistic to the real spirit of Church music. Mozart was, in at least one instance (his Requiem), inspired by the true spirit. It would be absurd and unfair to lay down that Schubert was actually incapable of being so; but at any rate he certainly wasn't in this *Sanctus*. If there is any true feeling for the text, it is very superficial. Still, even if (which is very unlikely) anyone feels this side of the disc worthless, the Bach alone is hardly too dear at the price.

The *Glasgow Orpheus* record should come near the top of secular choral records so far issued. The only trouble is the words, which may be intelligible to a Scot but are not so to me. You will have no difficulty in coming across the words of *The Laird o' Cockpen*. The conductor's own arrangement of this strikes out on a line all its own. Bantock's arrangement is effective enough, on more conventional lines. C. M. C.



BAND RECORDS

New Issues.

The latest batches of records I have received are, in the main, mediocrities. The one exception is a series of excerpts from *Aida* played by *Creatore's Band* (H.M.V. C.1339). This band has made a series of records of operatic selections which have been issued in America by the Victor Company, and as they have all been commented upon very favourably in *The Phonograph* I played this record with considerable interest. Judged from the purely technical point of view this is a really magnificent record. The band is quite a large one, composed obviously of first-rate instrumentalists and under very good control. The recording is very full, with a brilliant tone and no suggestion of hardness or harshness. I am told, whether it is true or not I cannot say, that all the Victor band records are now made in a disused church. I can quite believe that this is so, but wherever they are made and whatever band is playing this company certainly succeeds in obtaining the realism of a concert-hall performance without also obtaining the rather hollow effect that is associated with an empty building. The extracts recorded are the *Introduction*, *Moorish Dance*, *March* and *Finale* from Act II. The interpretation is virtuosic and rather too "prima-donna-ish" for my taste, but will doubtless please many people. The one serious fault I find in it is that the *Moorish Dance* is taken rather too slowly.

Another good H.M.V. record is No. C.1335, which contains *Der Freischütz* and *Light Cavalry* Overtures played by the *Coldstream Guards Band*. (The latter, by the way, is wrongly labelled "March" on my advance copy, but this will probably be corrected in the issues for sale.) The cutting necessary to get each of these Overtures on to one side of a twelve-inch disc has been done very skilfully. The playing is excellent and this is by far the best record made by this band for quite a long time.

The latest record by the *Welsh Guards Band* is a *New Sullivan Selection* (Aco G.16222). This is a selection composed of items from several of the operas. The playing is rather breathless in places and the rhythm is not too good. The recording of the clarinets is inclined to be rather shrill. Better, but with the higher notes still shrill and the middle of the

GRAMOPHONE



GRAND ORGAN SOLO. R. Arnold Greir, F.R.C.O.
No. 2943. FOUR INDIAN LOVE LYRICS. A. Woodforde-Finden
WELSH FOLK SONGS
SUNG IN WELSH BY MADAME MEGAN TELINI
No. 2952 — 2953 — 2954

Electrical Records

band rather indistinct, are two records by the **Beltona Military Band**. *The Entry of the Gladiators* is a fine march, and the playing is neater and crisper than it is in *Quand Madelon March* on the reverse (Beltona 1242). The other record (Beltona 1243) contains four hymn-tunes, the playing and recording of which can best be described as average.

Another record in which the middle of the band is rather muddy is that of *Faithful and Bold* and *Silent Heroes* marches played by the **Life Guards Band** (Voc. K.05312). This is not up to the high standard of the recent issues by this band and of the two sides the latter is the better in every way. Surely it is time that *Faithful and Bold* was given a rest. I can remember at least five records of this march that have been recorded by the electrical process. There are plenty of good marches still unrecorded.

It is a long time since I received a record from the Brunswick Company to review, and as the present one is by a band I have never heard before, I am doubly interested in it. **George Scharfe's Band** does not sound to be as big as many of the American combinations, but is a good band for all that. Neither *Radetsky March* nor *Military March* (Brunswick 101-B) is particularly thrilling and this record's chief claim to attention is the excellence of the recording. The only fault is that the sounds become a trifle blurred in forte passages.

Two good marches really finely played are *Old Comrades* and *Light of Foot* by the **Scots Guards Band** (Winner 4633). Here again the recording is of average rather than superlative quality. The *William Tell Overture* (Winner 4634) is so badly cut as to be almost unworthy of serious attention. This is a pity as the **Royal Artillery Band** (under the direction of Capt. Stretton) is a very fine band. The "Radio Times" made an amusing error in connection with a recent broadcast performance from 2 L.O. In the programme note of one of the selections played it was stated that a military band arrangement of the music was being used, whereas it was Capt. Stretton's String Band that was actually playing. In this case it is, of course, the military band.

Since I reviewed the first record to be issued in this country by the **American Legion Band** last month I have heard that not only is it an actual band (and not merely a body of instrumentalists playing under a *nom-de-guerre*), but that it was the winner at a recent open band contest in America. This is a pleasing confirmation of the opinion I expressed as to its quality. The second record to be issued contains *Barnum and Bailey's Favourites* and *Salutation Marches* (Zono 2938). The former is very commonplace, but the latter is quite a good march. The recording is first class again, and the playing equally so with the one exception of a few ragged edges in the former march due, doubtless, to the very great speed at which it is taken.

The Sorcerer Selection by the **Black Diamonds Band** (Zono, A322) is rather a disappointment. This is not on the same high level as the other selections from the lesser-known Gilbert and Sullivan operas that have been published recently. The playing lacks crispness and neatness, and is positively ragged in places, and the intonation is not perfect by any means.

Retrospective.

Looking back over the last six months my choice of the best records would be:—

Brass Band. *A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*. St. Hilda Colliery Band, Regal.

Military Band. *Poet and Peasant Overture* (Voc. K.05298) and *Suite of Serenades* (Voc. K.05293), Life Guards Band. *Belle of New York Selection* (Col. 9192). Grenadier Guards Band.

The Conqueror March (Zono, 2909). American Legion Band.

Aida Selection (H.M.V. C.1339). Creatore's Band.

W. A. C.

NEW-POOR RECORDS

BRUNSWICK.—Red Nichols and his Five Pennies provide the most brilliant "Hot" Jazz performances, for which there is now such a sudden demand. I instance ****Boneyard Shuffle* (3s.). A super-brilliant VIOLIN recording of two popular tunes most delightfully played, ****Chérie, I love you* (3s.). A WHISPERING BARITONE sings *Just the Same* (3s.) in the American style.

H.M.V.—All lovers of Marek Weber's gorgeous tones and pretty style will find him now perfectly recorded on this list. There are two 12in. disc, ****Tosca* (4s. 6d.) and *Carmen* (4s. 6d.), and two 10in. discs, one showing the exquisite violin solo, ****Gernhab' ich die Frau'n gekusst* (3s.), and the other a good Strauss Waltz, *Rosen aus dem Süden* (3s.).

HOMOCHORD.—First among these are two 10in. discs by the Mayflower Quintet. They are the best records of the kind I have ever had, the harp playing being specially notable and its recording so very good, ****Serenade* (Widor's) (2s. 6d.) and *One Alone* (2s. 6d.). The STRING ORCHESTRA plays *Scène du Bal* (4s.) and *Cavatina* (2s. 6d.). A delicate ORGAN record, *Intermezzo* (4s.). The best vocal rendering of ****One Alone* (2s. 6d.) I have yet heard.

IMPERIAL.—Dealers in these records will find the Jazz *Side by Side* (2s.) and the BARITONE song *Little Brown Baby* sure sellers.

PARLOPHONE.—What I may confidently recommend as the best all-round 10in. record I ever heard is ****Sanctuary of the Heart* (2s. 6d.), played by Frank Westfield's PICTURE-HOUSE ORCHESTRA. Those who have heard these performances over even the most expensive wireless set will receive a positive knockout blow when they play this record. It is well in the "ultra-brilliant" class and the tone volume is enormous. Another recording in the same class is a *grand* and *dignified* FOX TROT, ****Yankee Rose* (3s.); do not laugh at my adjectives, please, this is the most enthralling music in Fox Trot form I ever heard. A brilliant recording of the BARITONE voice with full orchestra, including kettle drums, ****The Trumpeter* (4s. 6d.). Some refined, accurate, delicate 'CELLO work, *At the Fountain* (4s. 6d.). UNCOMMON RECORD. Harpsichord with Viola da Gamba, *Divertimento* (4s. 6d.). ORCHESTRAL, Dr. Weissmann, as ever, shows strong life and nerve force in *Grand March, Tannhäuser* (4s. 6d.). Edith Lorand has another recording, *Faust Fantasia* (4s. 6d.).

ULTIMATE SELECTION.—ORCHESTRAL: *Tannhäuser*. PARLO.

STRING ORCHESTRA: *Scène du Bal*. HOMO.

SALON ORCHESTRA: 12in., ****Tosca*. H.M.V. 10in., ****Gernhab' ich die Frau'n gekusst*. H.M.V.

PICTURE PALACE ORCHESTRA: ****SANCTUARY OF THE HEART*. PARLO.

VIOLIN: (Popular) ****Chérie, I love you*. BRUNSWICK.

ORGAN: *Intermezzo*. HOMO.

BARITONE: *The Trumpeter*. PARLO.

POPULAR SONG: ****One Alone*. HOMO.

QUINTET: ****Widor's Serenade*. HOMO.

JAZZ: ****Yankee Rose*. PARLO.

HOT JAZZ: *The Boneyard Shuffle*. BRUNSWICK.

H. T. B.

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MISCELLANEOUS

I suspect that the lion's share of records has come my way this month: it is to be hoped, anyhow, that the other reviewers are not confronted with an equal increase.

Let us take the orchestral and instrumental records first. There are four fine records in the Parlophone list: the **Edith Lorand Orchestra** give full-blooded versions of Rachmaninoff's famous *Prelude* and the rather attractive *Liebesfeier*, Op. 16 No. 2, of Weingartner, which is new to me (Parlo. E.10590, 12in., 4s. 6d.), and really beautiful versions of Grieg's *Ich liebe dich* and of Sinding's *Rustle of Spring*, which rises to a good deal more than a rustle sometimes (E.10591, 4s. 6d.); while the **Dajos Bela Orchestra** gives us Popy's *Sphinx* waltz and Arnold's *You, only you* (E.10592, 4s. 6d.), and the **Dajos Bela Trio** makes a dainty 12in. record of Godard's *Berceuse de Jocelyn* and Braga's *Angel's Serenade* (E.10593, 4s. 6d.). If I had to put on only one of these to show a friend what Parlophone recording could do I should hesitate between 10591 and 10592. On the other hand **Frank Westfield's Orchestra** at the Prince of Wales's Playhouse, Lewisham, is enormously improving both in playing and recording in the 10in. series (Parlo. E.5809, 5810, 5825, 5826, 2s. 6d. each). These are good value for money. Then there is a first-class record of a Selection from *Ruddigore*, music loved almost best of all by the learned Savoyard, played by the **Margate Municipal Orchestra** for Edison Bell (V.F.718, 12in., 4s.). **Marek Weber** and his Orchestra are well heard in two Strauss waltzes, *Austrian Swallows* and *Vienna Blood* (Brunswick 60002, 12in., 4s. 6d.), less well in Paderewski's *Minuet* and *Liebesgruss* (Brunswick 103, 3s.), but far better, to my ear, in *Roses of the South* on both sides of H.M.V. E.G. 264 (10in., 3s.). The **Victor Olof Sextet** are pretty good in Moszkowski's *Serenade* and Brahms's *Fifth Hungarian Dance* (H.M.V. B.2451, 3s.); but I commend especially **Cruft's Octette** in Gillet's still welcome *Loin du Bal* and the only famous *Minuet* out of Boccherini's 125 string quintets (V.F.1210, 2s. 6d.).

Peggy Cochrane plays with as much skill and taste as ever four tunes from Woodforde-Finden's *Lover in Damascus* (Aco. G.16220, 2s. 6d.). This is a lovely recording, though the surface is bad; and a contrast to **Frederick Fradkin** (Brunswick 3467, 3s.), where the surface is the best part of the record. As for recording, what about **Mario de Pietro** on the guitar or the banjo (H.M.V. B.2475, 3s.)? This would take some beating. To those who have a taste for Hawaiian guitars I suggest trying the queer and ingenious 'cello and guitar record, *Signorina and Indian Wail*, composed and played by **Brunning and Buchanan** (Winner 4650, 2s. 6d.) in preference to the inevitable **Ferera and Paaluki** (Imperial 1770, 2s.).

Arnold Greir plays the *Indian Love Lyrics* on a grand organ (Zono. 2943, 2s. 6d.), but however good he may be, surely Laurence Hope's words are at least half the attraction of these songs? In view of the promised authoritative article on cinema organs I will not venture an opinion on the Wurlitzer records of **Reginald Foort**, *Ballet Egyptien* (H.M.V. B.2477, 3s.), Schubert's *Serenade* and *Only a Rose* (H.M.V. B.2491, 3s.), and of **Jesse Crawford**, *So Blue* and *Nesting Time* (H.M.V. B.2490, 3s.), or on the Christie Unit record of **Jack Courtney**, *One Fleeting Hour* and *Just a little lady* (Col. 4405, 3s.), except by saying that I have seldom liked a record of the *Ballet Egyptien* better, and that I still think Jesse Crawford the best player of them all.

Edythe Baker makes her debut with a 12in. piano record of two favourites, *The Birth of the Blues* and *My heart stood still* (Col. 9217, 4s. 6d.). I have not yet seen her or "One Dam Thing after Another," so I cannot judge whether this recording is worthy of her. But I am slightly disappointed—and why not a 10in.? **Al Siegel** is another famous performer who is disappointing on Zono. 2945 (2s. 6d.). What has happened to Max Darewski, Zonophone? Failing him, I should like to hear Tony Lowry playing for dancing. There is a gap in this

kind of record just at present which is not filled by **Billy Mayerl** vamping a **Whitebirds Selection** (Col. 9215, 12in., 4s. 6d.), though he certainly does it admirably. Probably **Fred Elizalde**, whose first record of *Siam Blues* and *Mine* on Brunswick 102 (3s.), an English recording, is a good sample of his calibre as a virtuoso, of which so much has been said lately, could give us exactly what I want; but for the moment I must be satisfied with some Columbia records, brought from Paris, one by Wiéner and one by Doucet, both first rank pianists, who also play in the Chevalier records mentioned below.

Percival Mackey's piano interludes in the *Lady Luck Selection* of the **London Theatre Orchestra** (Col. 9214, 12in., 4s. 6d.) are refreshing. These Selections are splendid. There is one of *The Blue Mazurka* too (Col. 9216, 12in., 4s. 6d.) by **Daly's Theatre Orchestra**. The public for this sort of thing is better catered for than almost any other section. I suppose a *Shake your Feet* Selection and a *Peggy-Ann* Selection will be out in a day or two. Meanwhile I want to thank the managements for sending me tickets for "The Desert Song" and "The Blue Train." With regard to the former, I am more impressed than before by the excellence of the Columbia records as a whole. The words are far clearer than as heard from the stalls. Miss Edith Day's voice is no more—and no less—attractive on the stage than on the records, but the wonderful way in which she "speaks with her hands" is a loss to the record. The best version of the *Sabre Song* is by **Gladys Moncrieff** with *The Desert Song* sung with **Frank Titterton** on Voc. K.05310 (12in., 4s. 6d.), a fine record. Except in the Selection mentioned last month and in the world of dance records I have not yet heard records of "The Blue Train," and await them with interest. Lily Elsie's songs and the great duet should be recorded quickly: but it is a pity that the ski-act of Bobby Howes cannot be preserved for posterity.

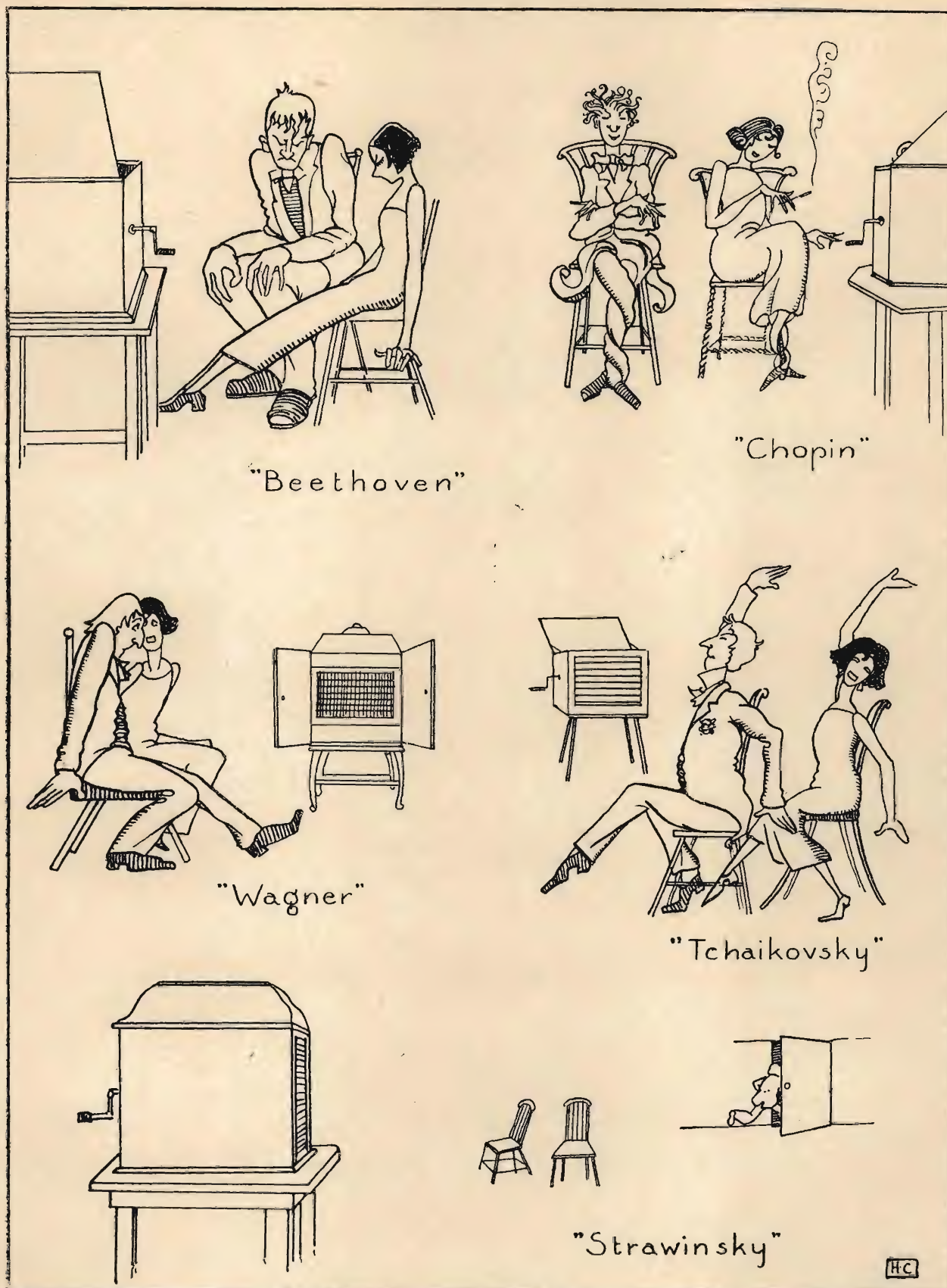
There are many records of *The Desert Song*, *The Song of the Riffs*, *Vagabond King*, *Only a Rose*, *One Alone* and one of *It*, besides those already reviewed. All that I have heard are adequate and I specially noticed the Regal and Winner issues, and **Morlais Morgan** on Winner 4642 (2s. 6d.), who takes *The Desert Song* more slowly than anyone else. He has a fine voice.

I did not see the *Chauve-Souris* this year at the Vaudeville, so I am doubly grateful to Columbia for giving us records, one 12in. (4425) and three 10in. (4423, 4424, 4425), of some of their songs. This Russian singing in its emotion, naivety, crudeness is not to everyone's taste, but I confess that I have played the records over many more times than anything else this month. *The Songs of the Black Hussars* and *Grief* (a vocal duet made out of a Chopin Etude) seems to me the most typical, most full of atmosphere; and though the latter with its tin-kettle piano accompaniment may horrify the purist, I have found the poignancy of the singing haunt my thoughts for days. Needless to say I always start these records with the music and cut out the absurd introductory gibberish of M. Balieff himself. The 12in. is actually the best record.

Of syncopated quartets **The Peerless Quartet** (Voc. X.10012 3s.), **The Four Merry Melodists** (Aco. G.16223, 2s. 6d.) and **The Syncopated Four** (Regal G.8880, 2s. 6d.) are all glib and adequate without being inspired. The first is perhaps the best and has **The Radio Kings** on the reverse. **The Revellers**, as might be expected, are wonderful in *Lucky Days* (H.M.V., B.2504, 3s.).

I recommend another Whitefield Tabernacle record, *Aberystwyth and Cum Rhondda*, two fine hymns sung by a full choir, with organ and Scots Guards Band to accompany them (Winner 4653, 2s. 6d.).

Will Kings, well known on the wireless, does a 12in. talking record of *Bertram at a Rotary Dinner* and *Bertram addresses the tenants* (H.M.V. C.1340, 4s. 6d.). It is pretty funny, but I should think the comments of Mr. Milton Hayes on it would be funnier. **Fred Walmsley** sings and mutters a macabre song



about the flu and is comic on the usual lines about a tram ride in Blackpool (Regal G.8890, 2s. 6d.). When are we going to get **Mack & Moran**. Columbia? Their first record, *Two Black Crows*, is highly spoken of in America.

Of vocal duets the most notable are **The Radio Imps** in *Four Leaf Clover* and *Take your finger out of your mouth* (Imperial 1769, 2s.); **Bobbie Gray and Eddie Reid**, a new and good combination, in *I'm tellin' the birds* and *Romany* (Winner 4652, 2s. 6d.); **Vivien Lambelet and Dorothy Lebish** in two prettily sung duets, the *Barcarolle* from *Tales of Hoffmann* and a curious version of Kreisler's *Caprice Viennois* which I have always found a very difficult tune to whistle (H.M.V. B.2471, 3s.); and **Layton and Johnstone** in four 10in. records (Col. 4400, 4406, 4407, 4408, 3s. each) and a 12in. *Medley* of songs published by Lawrence Wright Music Co. and by Francis, Day and Hunter. All are good, the lilt and the words as usual nearly perfect. I like *Golden Gate*, *South Wind* and *Pretty Little Thing* best, probably because I am too familiar with the other tunes.

Now for the soloists. **Elsie Carlisle's** charming record of *Baby and Since I found you*, with piano and violin accompaniment (H.M.V. B.2489, 3s.), came too late for review last month; and I am sorry to see that **Florence Oldham** (or Zonophone) has elected to substitute an orchestra for the first-class pianist of the previous records (Zono. 2944, 2s. 6d.). The bloom is off what was an indisputable peach. **Jane Green** (H.M.V. B.2482, 3s.) is a good American comedienne, but does not displace any of her competitors. **Annette Hanshaw** is rather sad this month (Actuelle, 11409, 2s. 6d.), but the blues suit her.

Both **Lewis James** and **Franklyn Baur** are accompanied by **Jesse Crawford** on the organ on Zono. 2946 (2s. 6d.); and whether I am in an unusually sympathetic mood I know not, but somehow I have never thought them so good before. Baur is equally good in *At Sundown* and *I'll take care of your cares* (Zono. 2942, 2s. 6d.). It is the same with others. **Edgar Trevor** (Regal 8883, 2s. 6d.), **Peter Rush** (Imperial 1764, 2s.), **Harry Carlton** (Aco. G.16224, 2s. 6d.), **Foster Richardson** (Zono. 2941, 2s. 6d.), **Barrington Hooper** (Zono. 2940 and 2959, 2s. 6d. each) and the **Silver Masked Tenor** (H.M.V. B.2476, 3s.) are all at the top of their form: **Irving Kaufman** rather better than usual (Aco. G.16225, 2s. 6d., and Imperial 1767, 2s.); and **Frank Munn** a decidedly good newcomer in *One Alone* and *The Little White House* (Brunswick 3413, 3s.). I have never enjoyed hearing the records of this section more. **Percy Bilsbury** in *Take a pair of sparkling eyes* and the *Berceuse de Jocelyn* is rather disappointing (Aco. G.16219, 2s. 6d.) and so are one or two others.

Jack Smith, who is said to have been earning £600 a week in London, holds his position better than most in the series of records. His *Blue Skies* and *It all depends on you* (H.M.V. B.2494, 3s.) may be only remarkable for an extra dose of whispering, but his *Me and my Shadow* and *Oh Golly, ain't she cute?* (H.M.V. B.2496, 3s.) is surely one of the best he has done yet. Of the **Maurice Chevalier** records issued by Columbia, in French, with two pianos, and, sometimes, Mlle. **Yvonne Vallée** to accompany him, I think *Je ne dis pas non* on 4402 (3s.) is the most typical of his very delightful style. **Chester Gaylord**, "the whispering serenader," is new to me and I strongly recommend him in *Just the Same* and *That's my hap-hap-happiness* (Brunswick 3482, 3s.). **Radio Red** on Imperial 1766 (2s.) is another singer of the same genre as **Wendall Hall** (Brunswick 3507, 3s.), **Harry Richman** (Brunswick 3242 and 3523, 3s. each), **Ed. Lowry** with the *Gilt-Edged Four* (Col. 4422, 3s.) and **Dick Robertson** (Col. 4409 and 4410, 3s. each), who are all pretty well established in our affections or prejudices. My selection would be Col. 4409 and Brunswick 3507 and 3523, but it wouldn't satisfy me.

Nick Lucas (Brunswick 3512, 3s.) and **Art Fowler** (Actuelle 11415, 2s. 6d.) might be added, and I should be sorry to miss **Willard Robison** (Actuelle 11416, 2s. 6d.) in *What's the use of crying?* and *Thinking of you*, though I wish they would give him a piano worthy of his playing. PEPPERING.

H.M.V. GERMAN RECORDINGS

[The following note by our reviewer N.P. should be compared with the Editor's references to this first lot of records from the German H.M.V. recording room in the article "July Records." —LONDON EDITOR.]

I imagine everyone wants to know which are the best of the German recordings and in what respects they differ from other H.M.V. recordings. The answer is that they differ mechanically very little, but artistically a great deal. The soft passages (as in Földes's 'cello solo, Rubinstein's *Melody in F*) are rather too soft, the climaxes in the orchestral works rather too strident, and the difficulty of securing accurately recorded string tone has not been overcome here to any greater extent than with us.

To take the orchestra first, the reason for the all-round superiority of these discs is due, to a considerable degree, to the fact that a really well-rehearsed orchestra accustomed to playing together always is recording, and an orchestra conducted by a man and composed of men who have the traditions of the music they are playing at their finger tips. Add to these points a finer definition of the various orchestral tones, in particular the wood-wind, than is achieved upon English records, and a conductor, Leo Blech, who builds up really thrilling but, if one can so describe them, well-disciplined climaxes.

The overture to *The Mastersingers* is better and fuller in tone than the Polydor electric recording, but the first side of the *Tannhäuser Overture* is less good than Albert Coates' or Mengelberg's versions. The wood wind are a little uncertain in intonation and acid in sound.

The *Oberon Overture*, except for an over-enthusiastic horn, is wonderful in every way and, I think, the best of the bunch, though the *Fledermaus Overture* (E.H.17) runs it close.

Turning to our old friend, Marek Weber, we find him as seductive as ever. Electric recording has not sharpened his lovely tone while it has clarified and richened his background. Here I particularly recommend the *Tosca Selection* (E.H.9) and the *Salut d'Amour* (sounding very fresh) record (E.G.314). The strings have an unpleasant edge in Kauffman's record (E.G.219).

Of the vocal records, Jaro Dworsky's is an easy first. He has a fine voice, sings very dramatically, and the orchestral accompaniment is first rate. It is difficult to make a choice of the choral recordings, as the appeal of the music will probably be the determining factor. All are very well recorded and artistically, though a little heavily, sung. The sopranos should have been stronger in the cathedral choir records. My own choice is *The Loreley* and its companion (E.G.215) and the exciting Kuban Cossack's record (E.J.47), though one side is short measure. Manfred Lewandowski has a full resonant voice, more baritone than tenor in quality, but he is very serious, and his singing of the *Prayer before Marriage* made me feel a little nervous for his bride-to-be.

Of Földes's and Wolfsthal's records I vote for E.G.233 for the very Scotch reason that you get one artist on each side: a plan that might be followed with advantage over here.

N. P.

BRUNSWICK.

It looks as if the British Brunswick Company, of 34, George Street, Hanover Square, had begun to distribute the Brunswick records themselves. The August bulletin has a new and more attractive appearance. Ravel's "Alborada del Gracioso" (80012) is new to the gramophone: Godowsky, Erica Morini and the New York String Quartet are in the list but the records have arrived too late for review, as did also eight dance records of American bands such as Brunswick votaries expect.



DANCE NOTES

By J. W. G.

What is the essence of a good dance band? Surely it is the power to renew the enthusiasm of the dancers when they are beginning to tire of the dance, by saving up just that little reserve of "pep" until towards the end of the tune. That is where nearly all of the English bands seem to fail so badly; no one can complain of their rhythm, but they seem to start "all out" and either continue so all through, or else (and this is worse) fall off in vigour when they are nearing the end. The American bands, on the other hand, strike a far happier note in their arrangements of tunes, thus avoiding that monotony which so easily makes itself felt. This is much more noticeable in the quieter tunes, as in the "hot" ones the whole thing is energy from beginning to end, and is more a case of the "survival of fittest."

In the ensuing notes, records of exceptional merit are in thick type, descending grades being represented by two stars and one star respectively. Distinctly inferior records are not included.

ACO (2s. 6d.).

I am sorry to say the Lyricals have failed us this month; their tunes are poor, so is their playing.

- 16226.—*Mine* (fox-trot) and ***The little white house* (fox-trot) (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). The latter is a rather attractive though somewhat sentimental tune.
- 16228.—***The Birth of the Blues* (fox-trot) and ***Sunday Girl* (fox-trot) (Cleveland Society Orchestra). *The Birth of the Blues* is well played, but I prefer it in slow time.
- 16230.—***You didn't like it—not much* (Charleston) and *It all depends on you* (fox-trot). The Lyricals.

BRUNSWICK (3s.).

This month's issues show a big improvement on last month's, although this batch is not up to their usual standard. Vincent Lopez is the "star" turn, Charley Straight and his Orchestra making a good second. I was glad to see the return of the Mound City Blue Blowers, but I confess "Nervous Puppies" bored me to distraction.

- 3481.—***South wind* (Charleston) and **At Sundown*. Phil Ohman and Victor Arden and Orchestra.
- 3484.—***What do I care what somebody said* (Charleston) and *Nervous Puppies* (Blues). Mound City Blue Blowers.
- 3491.—**I'll always remember you* (fox-trot) and **Lily* (fox-trot). Harry Archer and his Orchestra. Such poor tunes but so well played.
- 3516.—*Nesting time* (fox-trot) and *Side by Side* (Charleston). Charley Straight and his Orchestra. A good "hot" band with an amusing vocal chorus.
- 3517.—*I'll just go along* (fox-trot) and *A lane in Spain* (fox-trot). Vincent Lopez and his Casa Lopez Orchestra.
- 3519.—***Doll Dance* (fox-trot) and *Delirium* (Black Bottom). Carl Fenton's Orchestra. The former is the best version of this delightful tune. *Delirium* is a number which deserves its title but has no tune.
- 3427.—*My Sweetheart* (waltz) and *Bells of Hawaii* (Waltz) (Castlewood Marimba band).
- 3432.—***Where's that Rainbow* (Black Bottom) and ***A tree*

in the Park (Charleston) (both from "Peggy Ann"). Frank Black and his orchestra.

- 3511.—*I wonder how I look when I'm asleep* (fox trot) and *Just the Same* (fox trot). Six Jumping Jacks.

COLUMBIA.

I cannot describe the joy I got out of the two Strauss Waltzes. For those (and I am sure there is quite a goodly number of them) who still crave after the real waltz, this record should be a godsend. The tunes are directed by the grandson of the great Johann—what greater authority could there be—and I strongly recommend them to one and all as lovely waltzes, beautifully played.

For the rest, the Company is to be congratulated on their high standard. I'm afraid I don't rejoice with them in having secured the services of the Kit-Cat Band—this band cannot touch the Piccadilly Revels, which I consider the best English band recording.

12in. (4s. 6d.)

- 9218.—*Blue Danube* (waltz) and *Morgenblatter* (waltz). Johann Strauss and Symphony Orchestra.

10in. (3s.)

- 4399.—**I need some cooling off* (fox-trot) and ***My heart stood still* (fox-trot) (both from "One dam thing after another"). Kit-Cat Band.
- 4404.—**Da, da, da* (Charleston) and *Cuddle up* (Charleston) (both from "Whitebirds"). Kit-Cat Band.
- 4411.—**Side by Side* (Charleston) and **My Regular Girl* (Charleston). Kit Kat Band.
- 4413.—***Muddy Water* (Black Bottom) and *Shalimar* (waltz). Piccadilly Revels Band.
- 4414.—*Somebody said* (fox-trot) and *Positively-absolutely* (Charleston). Piccadilly Revels Band.
- 4415.—*Back Beats* (Charleston) and *Don't tell the world* (Charleston). Piccadilly Revels Band.
- 4416.—***Jog, jog, jogging along* (fox-trot) and *Reading between the lines* (fox-trot). Piccadilly Revels Band.
- 4417.—***Sweet thing* (Charleston), Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra, and ***Deed I do* (Charleston), The Radiolites.
- 4418.—*Half Moon* (fox-trot), The Knickerbockers, and *The little white house* (fox-trot), Howard Lanin and his Orchestra.
- 4419.—*Someday Sweetheart* (Blues) and *Wabash Blues* (Charleston). Charleston Chasers.
- 4420.—*Hop Head* (Charleston) and *East St. Louis Toodle-oo* (Blues). Duke Ellington and his Washingtonians.
- 4421.—***Tozo* (Charleston) and ***The Henderson Stomp* (Charleston). Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra. Both these tunes would get a little tiring if played a lot.
- 4434.—*Colette* (fox-trot), Leo Reisman and his Orchestra, and *Lucky Day* (Charleston), Howard Lanin and his Orchestra.
- 4435.—***In a little Spanish Town* (waltz) and *Roses for remembrance* (fox-trot). Debroy Somers Band.
- 4436.—***Bandy Bandolero* (6/8 one-step) and *When lights are low in Cairo* (fox-trot). Debroy Somers Band.
- 4437.—*A Tree in the Park* (fox-trot) and *Where's that Rainbow* (fox-trot) (Both from "Peggy Ann"). Harry Reser's Syncopators.

H.M.V. (3s.)

I cannot truthfully say that I got any amusement out of playing these records; even Paul Whiteman was very disappointing in B.5283. The Sylvians have made an uncommonly attractive waltz (B.5286) and Waring's Pennsylvanians are first-rate in "I wonder how I look when I'm asleep," but I regret to say there is hardly a bright spot among the others.

- B.5279.—***Sad'n blue* (fox-trot) and **Uncanny Banjo* (Charleston). Jack Hylton's Hyltonians. The rhythm is good in the Charleston.
- B.5280.—***Number 10* (Black bottom) and *Don't tell the world* (fox-trot). Hylton's Hyltonians.

- B.5283.—**I always knew I'd find you* (fox-trot) and **When I'm in your arms* (fox-trot). Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra.
- B.5284.—*Everything's made for love* (fox-trot), Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra, and *Forgive me* (fox-trot), Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra.
- B.5285.—*I've got a wonderful girl* (fox-trot) and *Sing a little love song* (fox-trot). The Sylvians.
- B.5286.—*Mine* (fox-trot), Savoy Orpheans, and ***C'est vous* (waltz), The Sylvians. A very pleasant dreamy waltz.
- B.5289.—***Brainstorm* (Charleston). Coon Sanders Orchestra. The treatment here is most original. And ***Sunny Disposish* (fox-trot). Jean Goldkette and his Orchestra.
- B.5291.—**My little bunch of happiness* (fox-trot) and ***Does she love me?* (Charleston). Jack Hylton and his Orchestra.
- B.5293.—*I wonder how I look when I'm asleep* (fox-trot) (Warings Pennsylvanians) and *Why should I say that I'm sorry* (fox-trot). Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra.
- B.5294.—***Side by side* (Charleston) and **At Sundown* (Charleston). Savoy Havana Band.
- B.5295.—***Following you around* (Roger Wolfe Kahn and his Orchestra). A very quick fox-trot, finely played, and *When day is done* (fox-trot). Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra.
- B.5296.—**Da, da, da* (Charleston), ("Whitebirds") and **My heart stood still* (fox-trot), ("One dam thing after another"). Jack Hylton and his Orchestra.
- B.5297.—***He's the last word* (Charleston) and *Dreamy Devon* (waltz). Savoy Orpheans.
- B.5299.—***Little White House* (fox-trot) and *I'll always remember you* (fox-trot). Savoy Orpheans.
- B.5271.—*I need lovin'* (fox-trot) and *Someday* (Charleston). The Sylvians.
- B.5300.—***Me and My shadow* (Charleston) and **Whispering Pines of Nevada* (waltz). Savoy Orpheans.
- B.5303.—***My regular girl* (Charleston). (Warings Pennsylvanians) and *Lucky Day* (fox-trot). George Olsen and his music.

IMPERIAL (2s.).

An excellent set of records. Sam Lanin, as usual, is first-rate and Jack Pettis' playing of "Muddy Waters" is quite outstanding.

- 1771.—***Sing* (Charleston), ("Lady Luck") and ***The Blue Train* (fox-trot). Buddy Rose and his Dance Band.
- 1772.—***Honolulu Song Bird* (fox-trot) and *Roses for Remembrance* (fox-trot). Buddy Rose and his Dance Band.
- 1773.—***It all depends on you* (fox-trot) and **The Birth of the Blues* (fox-trot) (George White's "Scandals"). Boston Society Orchestra. Only a fairly good rendering of the latter tune.
- 1774.—*Muddy Water* (Black Bottom) and *The little white house* (fox-trot), ("Honeymoon Lane"). Jack Pettis and his Band.
- 1775.—*I wonder how I look when I'm asleep* (fox-trot) and *Side by Side* (Charleston). Sam Lanin's Dance Orchestra. I prefer this version of the former tune to last month's Columbia.

PARLOPHONE (3s.).

I have no hesitation in saying that the Parlophone are the best set of records this month. Their "Royalty" series has been a tremendous success and I hope they will keep up to the standard they have set.

- R.3334.—*Colette* (fox-trot) and *My Sunday Girl* (Charleston). Tampa Blue Orchestra.
- R.3335.—***The Cat* (Charleston) and ***That's my hap-hap-happiness* (Charleston). Tampa Blue Orchestra. Two good Charlestons.
- R.3336.—*Beale St. Blues* (Blues) and *He's the last word* (Charleston). The Seven Notes. An excellent record altogether, the former being an entertaining "Blues" with a tango interlude.

- R.3337.—*Muddy Water* (Black bottom) and *The Whisper Song* (Charleston). The Goofus Washboards.
- R.3342.—***Fifty Million Frenchmen* (one-step) and *One sweet letter from home* (Blues). Miff Mole's Molars with Sophie Tucker and Ted Shapiro.
- R.3346.—*Side by Side* (Charleston) (Sam Lanin and his Famous Players) and *The Doll Dance* (fox-trot). The Roof Garden Orchestra.

REGAL (2s. 6d.).

I would like to have some music records by Geoffrey Gelder and his Kettners Five. Their record this month is exceedingly good.

- G.8884.—*The Little White House* (fox-trot) and *A Lane in Spain* (fox-trot). Geoffrey Gelder and his Kettners Five.
- G.8886.—***Side by Side* (Charleston) and *Anytime, anywhere* (waltz). Jack Payne and his Hotel Cecil Orchestra.
- G.8888.—***Sam, the old Accordion man* (Charleston) and **South Wind* (Charleston). Raymond Dance Band. The Accordion is used with great effect in "Sam."
- G.8889.—***Belinda* (6/8 one-step) and *Dreamy Devon* (waltz). Raymond Dance Band.

VOCALION (3s.).

- 10013.—***Under the Clover moon* (fox-trot) and **Midsummer madness* (Charleston). Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Orchestra. The former is saved from boredom by the Xylophone. Midsummer Madness is very quick.
- 10015.—*Underneath the weeping willow* (fox-trot) and *Where the wild, wild flowers grow* (fox-trot). Riverside Dance Band.
- 10016.—**Red lips, Kiss my blues away* (fox-trot) and *Mine* (fox-trot). Riverside Dance Band. Both poor tunes.

WINNER (2s. 6d.).

- 4645.—**Dreaming of Brown Eyes* (waltz) and ***Ain't she sweet* (fox-trot). Regent Dance Orchestra. The former is the usual modern tuneless waltz, but is played with a nice sense of rhythm.
- 4648.—*Everything's made for love* (fox-trot), Diplomat Novelty Orchestra, and *Mon Paris* (one-step, "Lido Lady"). Alfredo's New Princes Orchestra.
- 4654.—***I'm looking over a four leaf clover* (fox-trot) and *Moonbeams, kiss her for me* (fox-trot). Pavilion Players. The latter tune is a very obvious "crib" from Bye, bye, Blackbird, and not nearly so good.
- 4655.—*It all depends on you* (fox-trot, "Lido Lady") and *Birth of the Blues* (Blues). Regent Dance Orchestra. I like the "Birth of the Blues" played as a Blues as in this version.
- 4656.—**Ça-c'est Paris* (6/8 Paso-doble) and ***A Lane in Spain* (fox-trot). Regent Dance Orchestra. I don't like the instrumentation of the Paso-doble. The fox-trot is a tune with a flavour of the tango.
- 4657.—***My heart stood still* (fox-trot) and *I need some cooling off* (fox-trot) (both from "One dam thing after another"). Regent Dance Orchestra.

ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

- 2948.—***Sugar foot stomp* (Charleston) and ***Sax Appeal* (Charleston). Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band. Two good Charlestons.
- 2949.—***Does she love me?* (Charleston) and **So Blue* (waltz). Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra.
- 2951.—***The little White House* (fox-trot) and **I love the College Girls* (Charleston). Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra. The latter is a good tune that needs "pep" in the playing and does not get it here.

J. W. G.

CORNUCOPIAE

A Study in Gramophone Theory

By P. WILSON

II.—GENERAL PRINCIPLES—(continued).

IT must not be thought that the resolution of a musical note into a fundamental tone and a series of overtones or harmonics is merely a convenient mathematical fiction. That these tones do in fact have an objective existence may be proved in many ways. Usually the fundamental tone of a compound note is predominant, and until recently it was believed that this was the reason why a musical note normally has the pitch of its fundamental. But the property of pitch in a compound note is found to be a very complex thing. Strictly speaking, only the simple tones have that property. A few years ago Dr. Fletcher demonstrated experimentally that it is possible to obliterate the fundamental and several of the lower harmonics without affecting the sensation of pitch which we get from a musical note. The quality and power of the note may be profoundly modified, but not its pitch.

Two conclusions seem to be possible, and probably there is truth in both. In the first place it is likely that the various tones in a compound note react upon one another. It has been known for a long time that when two tones are sounded together a third faint tone is also produced whose frequency is the difference between the other two. This third tone is known as a "difference tone" or a "Tartini tone," from the name of its discoverer. Thus if we have two tones produced with frequencies in the ratios 2 and 5, there will also be present a feeble tone of frequency 3. In a musical note we have a series of tones with frequencies in the ratios:

Fundamental.	Octave	Twelfth.	Double octave.	
1	2	3	4	5 and so on.

If the fundamental is obliterated the resounding of the octave and the twelfth may still produce a difference tone of frequency, $3-2=1$, and this may be strengthened by the interaction between the overtones 3 and 4 and so on. A tone of the pitch of the fundamental may therefore actually reach the ear notwithstanding the fact that the fundamental was not originally produced.

Again, it is probable that the ear itself has peculiar properties in supplying "lost tones." Its physiological action is far from being thoroughly understood; and there is a good deal of evidence to show that it does not act in a simple way as a combination of resonators as Helmholtz thought. Whatever the full explanation, the fact remains that the existence of a fundamental tone in a musical note is not essential to the sensation of a pitch of the frequency of that fundamental.

It is very fortunate for gramophiles that this should be so. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the discovery and development of the gramophone is due to that one fact. The early phonographs (and even many of the modern gramophones, particularly the small ones) are incapable of reproducing tones of low frequency. What is more, the low tones were not even recorded. It may be doubted, for instance, whether until the advent of electric recording a tone of even so high a pitch as that of middle C was ever recorded, much less reproduced. But we all heard notes of lower pitch? Yes, but we heard them by virtue of their overtones and not because the lower tones actually existed. Were it not for this faculty the reproduction of an orchestra, say, would have been even more of a travesty than it actually was; so much so, in fact, that no one would ever have had the faith, or the financial incentive, to persevere with the art of gramophony.

These considerations have an equally important bearing upon our modern conditions of reproduction. The normal ear is capable of appreciating frequencies between about 20 cycles and 16,000 cycles. At the extreme ends of that range the sensations become physical rather than auditory. If we denote middle C by C, octaves below by subscripts C_1, C_2 , etc., and octaves above by indices C^1, C^2 , etc., the normal range of audition is rather less than 10 octaves:

Octaves ...	...	C_4	C_3	C_2	C_1	C	C^1	C^2	C^3	C^4	C^5	C^6
Frequencies ...	...	16	32	64	128	256	512	1024	2048	4096	8192	16384
Old recording range	.....										
Electric " "	.....										

The old mechanical system was only capable of recording at their full value tones between about 1,000 cycles and 2,000 cycles; at each end of the range the response fell off fairly rapidly. By interchanging components in the recording apparatus the range could be shifted bodily either higher or lower, but its extent was not much affected. With electric recording the uniform range extends from about 250 cycles to 4,500 cycles. Below 250 the response falls off gradually and cuts off completely round about 60 cycles; above 4,500, again, it falls off fairly rapidly, and cuts off completely at about 6,000 cycles. *No tones of pitch lower than 2 octaves below middle C are recorded, and the tones even up to middle C are short of full strength.* We may hear a note from a 16 foot organ pipe (32 cycles) on some records, but we hear it solely by virtue of its overtones, the fundamental and first harmonic being absent in the recording.

PRACTICAL NOTES.

By P. WILSON.

The New Lifebelt.

I find that quite a sensitive adjustment of quality can be made with the new Lifebelt. It is best not to look for a staggering improvement of quality; you probably won't get it. But by paying a little attention to adjustment you may get a little bit of extra definition here, another instrument there, a sense of ease at a crescendo or of delicacy at a diminuendo. You won't get it all at once; like all other delicate adjustments, it requires patience.

The things that matter are:

(1) The distance which the Lifebelt is pushed on the tone-arm.

(2) The position of the ring.

(3) The position of the wire stiffeners.

(4) The weight on the record.

I find that the first three vary somewhat with different instruments and sound-boxes. For my own

instrument I find that (1) should be $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. With the new H.M.V. machines, however, a greater distance is advisable. In both cases the ring should be pushed as far up to the tone-arm as possible. I get the best results with the wires one above the other. Mr. J. T. Fisher reports that he finds the same arrangement to be the best on his table model. On some instruments, however, it is best to have them in a horizontal plane. Each must try for himself. On some instruments, again, I have found it an advantage to clamp the Lifebelt to the tone-arm by means of a clip similar to that used with the W.G.N. weight-adjuster.

As regards weight on the record, I still find it best just to counterbalance the tone-arm and Lifebelt. For chamber music I find it better to use a lighter pressure on the record than for orchestral music, but the difference is best provided for by using a lighter sound-box for the one than the other. For chamber music $4\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. is enough, but for heavy orchestral records one can use as much as $6\frac{1}{2}$ —7 ozs. with advantage.



CREDE EXPERTO

By OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE

SOUND-BOXES FOR ELECTRIC RECORDING—*continued.*

Diaphragms and Gaskets.

THERE has probably been more time wasted in the search for the perfect diaphragm than in any other matter connected with the gramophone. Every enthusiastic gramophile has been through the fever and every material under the sun seems to have been tried. Needless to say, the perfect diaphragm has not been found and it is not likely that it ever will be. The reason is not far to seek. What we want is not a diaphragm at all but a perfectly-fitting, weightless piston, and this, of course, is quite unattainable. All we can ever hope to get is a diaphragm whose defects are either small within the normal musical range or are of such a nature that a correction can readily be made elsewhere.

What are the properties we should look for? It will be convenient perhaps if we give a list first of all and then amplify the points later:—

1. The mass (weight) should be small.
2. The lateral stiffness should be as great as possible and the edges should be "free" so that the diaphragm motion is as nearly as possible that of a plunger.
3. The area should be as large as possible, consistent with the foregoing conditions.

4. The elastic properties of the material should remain constant when it is subjected to oscillating strains.

5. The material should be unaffected by damp, change of temperature and atmospheric erosion.

Certain fundamental difficulties about the first three requirements should be noted at the start. Small mass implies a thin plate, and the larger the area the thinner the plate has to be. But this very thinness defeats the second condition, which is very important. There is thus a limit set to the size of the diaphragm, and this limit will depend largely on the elastic properties of the material and on the method by which the diaphragm is mounted and actuated. It may be taken as almost axiomatic that the air on one side of the diaphragm must be shut off from that on the other. The diaphragm has to create pressure variations in the sound-box chamber, and any leak will seriously affect the nature of those pressure variations for different frequencies of vibration. For low frequencies the pressure will have more time to escape *through the leak* than for high frequencies, and thus a leak will usually cause a suppression of the bass. It also, of course, reduces volume and causes resonances which we particularly want to avoid. The diaphragm therefore has to be

clamped or supported at the edge in such a way that the joint is air-tight. But here we strike a similar difficulty. The clamping again has a tendency to make pronounced resonances. These did not matter so much with old recording, but with electric recording they are very serious defects.

The difficulty has been tackled in two ways. The most straightforward way is to use very soft gaskets only lightly compressed, but there are limits to what can be accomplished in this way. Gaskets which are too soft or too little compressed do not recover quickly enough to follow the motions of the diaphragm. Cycle valve tubing naturally suggests itself as being the softest rubber available, but we have never found it answer very well, apart altogether from the fact that it soon perishes and is exceedingly subject to atmospheric changes. Satisfactory gasket tubing is very difficult to obtain just now. The best we have come across is that used in *Prizmaphone* and *Orchorsol* sound-boxes. We came across even better samples the other day and are trying to trace their origin. If we succeed we shall be glad to furnish the information to any dealer who applies to the London office so that supplies may be made available for the use of the general public.

We shall have more to say on the question of gaskets later on. But before we pass on to the next point we would remind readers that the H.M.V No. 2 and No. 4 sound-boxes have gaskets in the form of a split ring of solid rubber. There are doubtless good commercial reasons why this form should be used; it simplifies assembly and ensures that the diaphragm does not touch the shell of the sound-box. But we have found that for electric recording, at all events, an improvement can be effected by replacing these gaskets by tubular gaskets of suitable size and quality. We warn readers, however, that they should not lightly undertake to alter a No. 4 sound-box; it is a delicate job which requires skilled fingers.

The second method which has been adopted to give the diaphragm more of a plunger motion is to stiffen the central area and weaken the outer edge. Edison introduced this method very many years ago both by bevelling the edge and by artificially building up the centre. Since then there have been innumerable variations, of which the corrugated diaphragm of some cellulose material used in the Cliftophone and the spun or pressed rings on aluminium diaphragms are modern examples. The mechanical fault of all these artificial diaphragms up to the present has been that the radial stiffness, even with the corrugations, has been small compared with the mass. Indeed, few of them have been able to compare in this respect with an ordinary mica diaphragm which, owing to its laminations, has great rigidity for a small mass. Most of them, too, have been subject to the physical disadvantages of being easily deformed, of softening or altering their crystalline structure under the oscillating stresses imparted to them by the stylus-

bar, and of responding too readily to changes of temperature or atmospheric conditions. It may be that in the near future some diaphragm will be produced which will not be subject to these defects. At present, however, we remain of the opinion we expressed a year ago that, if properly used, mica still holds the field both for quality in reproduction and staying power. The only material we know which can compare with it is glass, and that, perhaps, is too fragile for general use. After that we place the artificially stiffened diaphragms made of duralumin or similar aluminium alloys, though in these cases the danger of softening and tiring is particularly difficult to avoid.

The latest attempt to overcome these faults and at the same time to make the diaphragm practically independent of the nature of the clamping at the edge is to be found in the Orthophonic Victrola. We have not yet had an opportunity of testing one of these instruments and cannot therefore judge how successful the method has actually been. The following particulars are taken from Maxfield and Harrison's paper published in the *Journal of the A.I.E.E.* for March, 1926. Copies can be seen at the Patent Office Library. We give a short description here as an illustration of the scientific methods which are now being applied to gramophone design.

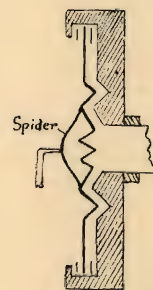


Fig. 13

For the diaphragm of this sound-box an aluminium alloy sheet 0.0017 inch thick was chosen and concentrically corrugated as shown in Fig. 13. The effective mass of the diaphragm was fixed, having regard to the difficulty of obtaining a diaphragm which is light enough and has a large enough area, at 0.186 grms., and the effective area is about 13 square centimetres. In order to obtain a more definite plunger action the central stiffened portion is driven at six points near its periphery and not at the centre as in the ordinary sound-box. The connection between the stylus-bar and the diaphragm is effected by means of a six-legged "spider" similar to that which was formerly used in the old phonograph reproducers. The shape and size of this spider are, however, carefully designed so as to have a certain mass and compliance, determined by calculation to match the other parts of the reproducing system. It will be noticed also that the shape of the back-plate is made to correspond with the diaphragm.

THE CRESCENT TONE-ARM

This production of the Vernon Lockwood Manufacturing Co. is one of the new small bore type of tone-arms now so popular, but possesses certain quite unusual features of interest. Its design is obviously intended to give manufacturers, or amateur gramophone constructors, no excuse for evading the issue of needle track alignment; for by suitably positioning the tone-arm in relation to the turnstile a close approximation can be made to the desired tangential relation of the needle to the record during playing. We are glad to note that more manufacturers are now waking up to the importance of this feature of gramophone construction. The simplest method of obtaining approximately tangential tracking is to arrange for the needle point to project a certain distance beyond the turntable spindle and so to fit the sound-box that the needle, in plan view, lies at a certain angle to the line joining its point to the tone-arm back centre. These overall lengths and angles have been calculated and published in earlier numbers of *THE GRAMOPHONE*.

The result is achieved in this case by the shape of that part of the tone-arm to which the sound-box is attached. This consists of a long sweep of tapered solid-drawn brass tubing which is curved to a radius of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches for some 7 inches in length (hence the name "Crescent") and then continues with a small radius into the screwed socket joint, which gives the necessary vertical movement. From this socket another elbow connects to the base by an ingenious ball-bearing joint. This bearing, by the use of surfaces turned to spherical curves, is self-centering, and can be adjusted to a nicety by a screwed brass cap.

In common with all ball-bearing types of tone-arm, a little touch of vaseline is needed to make the joint sound-tight. The base flange measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across and has an outlet tube of 15/16th inch bore which projects $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to connect with a suitable amplifier. There are no inward projections or obstructions in the tone-arm, and it appears to be a sound

mechanical job in every way. The overall length varies, of course, with the sound-box used, and the angular setting of the sound-box is round about 20 degrees.

No doubt the makers would be pleased to advise gramophone manufacturers as to the most suitable size of sound-box and the correct positioning of the tone-arm, since no tone-arm can give the best tracking results unless correctly fitted.

PEROPHONE SOUND-BOXES

In our last article we described and illustrated the new design of stylus-bar mounting that Perophone Ltd. have adopted in their latest sound-boxes. We have now tested three such boxes, known respectively as "Micro-Perophone," Model F and Model N. Their prices decrease in this order, and the most expensive one is unlikely to cost more than 15s. All are fitted with 52 mm. micas; Model N is decidedly heavier than the others, and its mica is ensured against damage by a perforated plated cover, while the others have conventional open faces and their shells are made of aluminium. They are attractive looking boxes of good workmanship.

We have tried all three on several machines. The results were surprisingly good when the price of the sound-boxes is considered. In conjunction with long amplifiers we found, as a rule, that steel needles were most suitable; with smaller amplifiers of the old-fashioned type, fibres gave good reproduction both in tone and volume. With vocal and light instrumental music the lighter boxes, especially "Micro-Perophone," were usually superior to Model N, which, however, scored over its higher priced rivals on vigorous orchestral records. The weight of Model N is such that with continental tone-arms a weight adjuster is highly desirable.

One or other of these boxes would doubtless prove a useful adjunct to a large number of machines, and we cordially recommend them to the notice of those readers who seek a good sound-box at a moderate price.

OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE.



Beethoven in Bonn, May 22-31, 1927

By JOHN NOBLE

AFTER attending the Austrian Festival in Vienna and the German in Bonn, a visitor to both could hardly fail to notice a difference in the predominating spirit, as also in the musical achievements of the two. Bonn and Germany were Beethoven's native town and country, Vienna and Austria those of his adoption; consequently the former seemed to have a fixed determination to keep him severely to themselves. That this is a great pity was evident from the difference between the two Festivals. In Vienna the spirit seemed to say:—"We Viennese are justly proud that Beethoven chose to live with us, and we wish to pay him the homage he deserves. Anyone willing to help us is most heartily welcome," and thus a number of foreign artists took part in the concerts and were received as gladly as the Austrians. It was the homage of the world to a great musician. Not so in Bonn. Only German artists were engaged, with a strong bias to Bonn artists. *Germany*, feeling very patriotic, was paying tribute to a *German* musician, and Bonn was not to go without its share of glory. Indeed, the

whole difference might be reduced to a psychology of flags. In Vienna the flags of most European nations were flown in large numbers; in Bonn, though there was no lack of flags, there were only Bonn, Prussian or German to be seen. Not a single foreign flag. What a narrow-minded way to treat an opportunity that will not recur for a hundred years!

Unfortunately this spirit was not merely bad in itself, but had an unhappy effect on the music also. That is not to say that the musical performances were bad. On the whole the standard, especially amongst the soloists, was very high. Yet, owing to excessive patriotism, it was not quite as good as it should have been, this being particularly the case with the orchestra. Anyone knows that Germany has orchestras equal to any in the world, but the "Bonner Städtisches Orchester" was relied on for the whole Festival. The strings of the orchestra are good, but the intonation of the wood-wind is uncertain and their tone is sour, while the brass is too "brassy" and strident in any loud passage. Of course it is easy to see that it was not possible to go against local

feeling entirely, but it is a pity that a better orchestra was not engaged for a first-class festival, especially as the tickets were expensive and a full house for every performance was assured.

The musical part of the Festival started on Sunday, May 22nd, on the Münsterplatz, with speeches and singing in the open air, which do not call for much criticism. A male choir, 1,200 strong, sang the "Opferlied" and "Aus der Natur" very beautifully, and various officials made speeches and laid wreaths on Beethoven's statue. During the course of the next 10 days there were two cycles of the Festival programme, which ended with a performance on the Marktplatz, illuminated by electric bulbs for the occasion in the town colours. The orchestra played the Egmont Overture and the Andante from the Fifth Symphony, and the choir joined them for the finale of the Choral Symphony. All of these were quite well heard because the large crowd behaved admirably and made very little noise.

The first orchestral concert was conducted by Dr. Siegmund von Hausegger, of Munich, who gave a good if somewhat dull performance of the First Symphony and a very good reading of the Eroica that was only spoilt by the wind instruments. The horns in the trio to the Scherzo were positively unpleasant, and sounded more like "jazz" trumpets than French horns. Elly Ney, a Bonn pianist, who was well received a little while ago in London, gave a very good performance of the Emperor Concerto. The first two movements were sometimes played a little too seriously, but the finale was marvellous.

The second orchestral concert was easily the best of all. Fritz Busch, of Dresden, conducted, and his brother, Adolph, played the violin concerto. The latter seemed to have something wrong with one of his strings; but after a little hesitancy over the first few bars gave a very sound performance, the finale being especially good. There followed an excellent performance of the Choral Symphony, conducted from memory by Fritz Busch. The chorus were quite equal to their difficult task, and the failings of the wind were reduced to a minimum, so that we heard a really good performance. Fritz Busch was evidently the hero of the festival, and was cheered wildly by the audience.

The first chamber music concert was not very satisfactory, chiefly because the Wendling quartet are not quite first-rate. They have many qualities necessary to a quartet, but their tone is weak and the leader too prominent. They played the second Rasoumoffsky quartet in E minor quite well, apart from one lapse by the leader; but the A minor quartet, Op. 132, was more than they could manage. To be sure, they played the notes right enough, but they lacked the "divine fire" necessary to make the work live. In between the two quartets Elly Ney, Philipp Dreisbach (clarinet) and the 'cellist of the quartet played the trio in B flat, Op. 11. It was no service to Beethoven

to have performed this work, which, despite several beautiful passages, is on the whole very insignificant.

The second chamber music concert reached a higher level of performance. Edwin Fischer played the sonata in C minor, Op. 111, thrillingly, if at times a little too powerfully. Karl Erb, who has been singing at Covent Garden, extracted a great deal of beauty from the "an die entfernte Geliebte" song-cycle. This might well be recorded for the gramophone. The concert ended with a rather superficial performance by the Wendling quartet and others of the septet, which sounded worse than it really is.

The Festival finished with the Missa Solemnis, conducted by Max Anton, the "Generalmusikdirektor," with Amalie Merz-Tunner, Maria Philippi, Karl Erb and Albert Fischer (surely the largest singer in the world!) as soloists, and very good they were. Max Anton is not a good conductor, but the chorus were very capable and the wind did not stand out too much, so that we got a satisfactory performance, though the solo quartet were sometimes a little under-accompanied.

As can be seen from the above, the programme was rather pedestrian by comparison with the Vienna one; but what it lost in originality it made up to some extent in solid virtue. Most of the works are already recorded by the various companies, but when are we going to have some of the third period piano sonatas?

JOHN NOBLE.

THE SECOND Bradford Festival of Chamber Music

QUEEN'S HALL, BRADFORD
October 4th and 5th, 1927

THE VIRTUOSO STRING QUARTET

PIANO: WILLIAM MURDOCH and
ARNOLD BAX

HARP: GWENDOLEN MASON

OBOE: LEON GOOSSENS

CLARINET: CHARLES DRAPER

BASSOON: E. HINCHLIFF

HORN: AUBREY BRAIN

BASS: CLAUDE HOBDAV

Full Programmes and Particulars may be had on
application to

KEITH DOUGLAS, Hon. Secretary
Farfield Hall, Addingham, Ilkley
YORKSHIRE

OR TO
Messrs. IBBS & TILLET
124, Wigmore Street, London, W.1

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

The July Meeting

On July 7th the meeting in Murdoch's Rooms at 463, Oxford Street was well attended by members and by a certain number of readers of THE GRAMOPHONE who were interested in the informal proceedings. To begin with, M. André Mangeot and Mr. Boris Pecker very kindly came to play the Honegger *Sonatine* for two violins so that those present could judge whether they thought this work worth recording. It is in three movements, and though the delicate pattern of the music was difficult to follow at a first hearing, the applause at the end was at least evidence of our appreciation of the players. The Secretary welcomed Mr. W. W. Cobbett, the doyen of the Advisory Committee, and thanked M. Mangeot and Mr. Pecker, who, unfortunately, had to hurry off to other engagements. The Bax Oboe Quintet records were then played through on Big Bertha, which was in the charge of Mr. Balmain himself and of Mr. P. Wilson, with such instantaneous success that without doubt these two records are going to prove the most popular of those so far made for the Society. At the end of the first movement Mr. Cobbett jumped to his feet to express his delight and to assure those present that this was a work which did the greatest honour to the composer and to his country. A letter from Mr. Arnold Bax was read, expressing his approval of the interpretation and suggesting that while the first and last movements should be played with a soft needle or a fibre, the middle movement demanded a medium-toned needle.

Mr. P. Wilson was then called upon for a short talk on "Fashions and Fallacies" of the gramophone, and was able to convince even the most unscientific of us that we are now past the empirical stage of gramophone development and that with the results of scientific research at our disposal are able to calculate the effects of design and adjustment with a sureness hitherto unknown. Among other things he emphasised the fact that the human brain is able to imagine a good many things which the human ear does not actually hear. His easy and humorous discourse was an admirable survey of the field in which he and the Expert Committee love to browse.

Mr. Peter Latham made a few introductory remarks to the records of Dvorák's *Pianoforte Quintet*, which were then played; and after a vote of thanks to Mr. A. T. Evans and Messrs. Murdoch, by whose courtesy the meeting had taken place, a general disintegration and re-grouping were observed and the Balmain machine became the centre of attraction.

Altogether a very pleasant meeting, which must be resumed as soon as the autumn comes and there are new records to try over.

The Ravel Quartet

At the last moment an unforeseen obstacle arose which prevented the records of the Ravel quartet from being distributed. M. Ravel himself came to London and most graciously spent a precious morning in listening to the white label records with M. Mangeot at the Aeolian Hall. He was delighted with them, and felt that the interpretation was so nearly exactly what he would have wished that it would be a pity not to re-record one or two passages so as to get the tempo perfect. This has been done by the International String Quartet, and M. Mangeot made a special journey to Paris with the new "white labels" in order to get the approval of M. Ravel. Members who have paid for the records and have been expecting to receive them with the Bax and the Dvorák will understand that an authentic work with the imprimatur of the composer is worth waiting for in patience.

76, 77.—ARNOLD BAX. *Quintet for Oboe and Strings*. Played by Léon Goossens (to whom the work was dedicated) and the International String Quartet. Two 12-inch double-sided records.

82-86. DVORAK. *Pianoforte Quintet in A major*, Op. 81. Played by Ethel Bartlett and the Spencer Dyke Quartet. Nine sides.

JOSEPH SPEAIGHT. *Shakespeare Fairy Characters*, 1st Series, No. 2, *The Lonely Shepherd*. Played by the Spencer Dyke Quartet. One side. Together five 12-inch double-sided records.

Programme for Next Year

Two copies of the Voting List for the programme for 1927-1928 have been sent to everyone whose name is registered as a member of the Society. One copy is for reference; the other should be marked and returned to the Secretary as soon as possible.

The Phonograph

A remarkable tribute to the work of the Society is published in the August number of *The Phonograph*, our American cousin, which is edited by Mr. Axel B. Johnson from 64, Hyde Park Avenue, Boston, Mass. An advance copy of the article was sent to the Secretary, and it is so generous and yet so discerning in outlook that the example might well be followed by editors of English musical journals who are just as much in sympathy with the aims of the Society but, with a few exceptions, hesitate to let themselves go in print.

The Talking Machine World

That our activities are watched with approval on the other side of the Atlantic is shown also by a leading article in that handsome monster, *The Talking Machine World*, of New York, for June, where the sympathy of the British Recording Companies with the objects of the N.G.S. is held up as an example of shrewd business foresight. "The phonograph industry over there had the wisdom to see that a new lode of ore had been tapped by an independent prospector. They did not try to run the discoverer out of town. On the contrary, they called him in and asked him what they could do him. And consequently all of them have flourished." Which is indeed one way of describing it, though it had not occurred to most of us as what was happening.

Practical Help

In order that the programme for next year may be carried out with confidence it is most important that new members should be enrolled. There are hundreds of people who would be grateful to be told of the very existence of the Society. You must know one or two of them yourself. Will you distribute some copies of the catalogue of records with a personal note? Will you inveigle your friends to pay a visit to Murdoch's and to hear some of the N.G.S. records in peace in the upstairs room which has been placed at our disposal? The Secretary is most anxious to hear of any likely members or of any means to make the Society more widely known.

[All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.]

Maurice Ravel's letter, approving the N.G.S. records of his Quartet in F major, has arrived too late for publication.



A Member of the National Gramophonic Society finding that the wrong records have been sent to him.

By E. Squire

TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

Broadcasting Records

Some of our readers may have discovered that, beginning on July 7th, the London Editor co-operated with the B.B.C. in arranging the programmes and writing a few words of introduction for the gramophone records broadcast from 2 LO from 1 to 2 p.m. on Thursdays. The innovation has been well received by listeners; and readers of *THE GRAMOPHONE* who have receiving sets may like to hear the records of which they have read our reviewers' opinions, and may also be able to assist the London Editor with suggestions for making the "gramophone hour" increasingly useful and enjoyable.

The Cobbett Dinner

The dinner given at Prince's Restaurant on July 11th to Mr. Walter Wilson Cobbett in honour of his 80th birthday, and in recognition of his services to Music in general, and to Chamber Music in particular, was one of those occasions when all musical London gathered together to enjoy itself. Sir Hugh Allen was in the chair and proposed the toast of Mr. Cobbett, whose reply was worthy of the occasion. Later in the evening various other notable people bore testimony to what Mr. Cobbett has done for music in this country, and charming performances, under rather sultry conditions, were given of Frank Bridge's Piano Quartet by Mrs. Hobday, Albert Sammons, Lionel Tertis and Ivor James; and of the Vaughan Williams Fantasy Quintet by the International String Quartet and Cecil Bonvalot. We should like here and now to add a tribute to the wisdom, enthusiasm and generosity with which Mr. Cobbett from the very first has helped the National Gramophonic Society. The support of such a recognised authority as he is has been an incalculable stimulus to the working of the Society, and has given it a kind of hall-mark of high standards. He professed in his speech to feel only about 50 years old, so we hope to continue to receive his active support and assistance for very many years to come.

Good Service

We have received a certain amount of correspondence about a letter which appeared in our last issue under the above heading, and it is significant that the Company referred to was by no means always identified. As a matter of fact, Mr. R. A. Nethercot was referring to the Parlophone Company. One letter describing a transaction with The Gramophone Company about the exchange of an H.M.V. model ended with these words, "Can this be excelled for fair trading?" We think not. We also think that it would not be a kindness to our friends of The Gramophone Company if we disclosed the details, or they would be flooded with demands for similar treatment.

Size in Gramophones

Mr. Balmain's "Big Bertha" daunted a good many of those members of the N.G.S. who were present at the meeting at Murdoch's Rooms on July 7th, and Mr. P. Wilson described the enormous horn which would be necessary to reproduce all the frequencies desired. But what about the machine which is being tried out by The Gramophone Company at Hayes? It is 11 feet high, over 8 feet wide, 6 feet deep and weighs 30 cwt. The mouth of the horn contains an area of 50 sq. feet.

A contest between this and the Mikiphone would be instructive, especially as the latter was awarded a first prize at the International Exposition of Music recently held at Geneva.

Arnold Bax

By an oversight Mr. Chislett omitted from his article on Arnold Bax last month the record by Anne Thursfield (H.M.V. E.410) of *Cradle Song* and *Rann of Exile*, Nos. 1 and 2 of the *Three Irish Songs*. Many readers have written to point out the omission. Another omission was any acknowledgment of the fact that the portrait of the composer, by Herbert Lambert, of Bath, belongs to Messrs. Curwen, and is in the volume of British Composers published by them with an introduction by Eugene Goossens. Mr. Bax has written to the Secretary of the N.G.S. to say that he is "extremely pleased with the recording of my oboe quintet"; and as the composer's blessing was also obtained for the Ravel Quartet in F records, the members of the N.G.S. are able to congratulate themselves on two possessions of a very distinctive value.



Mr. HARRY HUDSON.

The Garde Républicaine Band

Mr. Chislett must have another rap over the knuckles for the footnote to his article in the June number. The Zonophone 1927 catalogue shows five records of "the most famous French Military Band," and everyone who was interested by the article should make a note of these—the record numbers being 416, 429, 432, A.19 and 8. None the less, we wish Mr. Chislett good fortune in his latest enterprise of reviewing gramophone records in *The World of To-day*. There he is able to cover a wider field of music than among our Band Record Reviews. A propos, another of our contributors, Mr. John F. Porte, has sent us a copy of *The British Bandsman* for June, in which a nameless one writes amusingly of his experiences in a recording room. This is worth reading if the chance arises.

The Glasgow Gramophone Society

It transpires that the method of storing records about which "Rotatures" and "Scrutator" made merry in the Correspondence columns last month is patented and manufactured by a member of the Glasgow G.S., while another member has produced a new sound-box "which for realistic effect and purity of tone when playing records of pianos and all string instruments is a revelation to all who have been fortunate enough to hear it." Is zat so? Perhaps one of these days we shall see the much-lauded record-storing cabinet and the redoubtable sound-box at the London Office: but Glasgow is a long way off, and the postage of a letter of unbiassed enthusiasm costs only 1½d.

Edison Bell

Changes are announced by Messrs. Edison Bell Ltd. Mr. Harry Hudson—can he be separated even in thought from Mr. Stanley Kirkby?—is the new Recording Manager, and Mr. George Ison, the well-known accompanist, is the new Musical Director. This is a strong combination which should ensure a close appreciation of popular taste. Whatever developments of policy it may foreshadow, we wish Edison Bell success, for it is a fine British firm with great traditions; but we hope that every now and then Messrs. Hudson and Ison

will find room for some more of those cheap records of good unrecorded music like the Dream of Gerontius, the wind quintets, the Eugene Goossens. Are the new Velvet Face records of Russian Ballets—The Three-Cornered Hat, L'Oiseau de Feu, Pétouchka and Prince Igor—relics of the old order or harbingers of the new?

Caruso on the Films

Caruso died on August 2nd six years ago. A correspondent writes to remind us that he appeared in two films of light comedy, "My Cousin" and "The Splendid Romance," in the former doubling the parts of a famous singer and his cousin; and adds that "by virtue of Caruso's droll humour the somewhat slender story proved to be good entertainment." Will not someone—the Film Society, for instance—rescue these reels from the limbo of Wardour Street and let us see them again?

Old Records

Do not forget that Mrs. Stanley Baldwin is appealing to us for "unwanted, scratched, or broken gramophone records." She will arrange to collect them from your home, she will turn them into money for the Blue Triangle and will build a Club for Girls with the proceeds. You have only to sort out your old records and send a post card to THE GRAMOPHONE or to Mrs. Stanley Baldwin, 10, Downing Street, London.

Sealed Records

We are informed that the idea of sealing records as a guarantee that they have not been played has been "enthusiastically adopted" by Messrs. J. B. Cramer and Co. in connection with their postal business. Messrs. Foyle report the same development. No doubt others will follow suit.

The Index to Vol. IV.

This index was much appreciated by the few who bind their copies of THE GRAMOPHONE and by the musical or gramophone critics of our contemporaries to whom we sent it. The small edition has served its purpose and is now practically exhausted. We shall not, presumably, after this experience, be expected to repeat the performance at the end of Vol. V. There are limits to philanthropy.

Britain's Far-Flung Music Line

In case this plum has been missed by any of our readers we reprint it as received from H.M.V.:—

The following letter from West Africa—addressed to "Master Voice, City of England"—has been delivered at the London office of the Gramophone Company:

"Honoured and Respectable Master Voice,
"With greatest emotion I write to you for I am sometimes hear you am fattest and fairiest trader in the City of England I myself also too am Englishman my father he am one big trader johnny once dead by fever and my mother am one pure Lagos gal I beseech you on knee Master Voice send me free one big catalogue of you worthy gramophones and worshipfully send me one bible for convert heathens.

"Yours Faithfully Friend,
"Kekeri Ladikoy."

Reminder

Seats for the four Concerts of the Bradford Festival of Chamber Music on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 4th and 5th, should be booked without delay. Full particulars from the Hon. Secretary, Queen's Hall, Bradford. The "first" seats cost 26s. for the series, the "second" seats 15s., or seats can be booked for the Concerts separately.

An Electrical Reproducer

In all probability the Expert Committee will be reporting next month on an electrical "pick-up," manufactured by

Messrs. S. G. Brown, Ltd., the famous loud speaker people. For the uninitiated it may be mentioned that a pick-up is a small electro-magnetic device which is fitted to the tone-arm of a gramophone in the place of the usual sound-box. Its object is to convert sound vibrations picked up by the needle from the record into electric impulses. These are conveyed by flexible wires to an electrical amplifier, the output from which operates any form of loud speaker desired. The gramophone tone-arm and horn can be used as the loud speaker if a loud speaker unit (or gramophone attachment) is fitted and a separate carrying arm for the pick-up is used. A preliminary test indicated very interesting possibilities in the electrical reproduction of gramophone records. For one thing there is no limit to the volume obtainable by electrical amplification of the tiny current received from the pick-up, although a two-stage ordinary low frequency amplifier will probably give all that most people will require. The tonal results attained depend, of course, entirely on the quality and efficiency of the electrical apparatus and loud speaker used; but if these are ordinarily good, the reproduction is comparable with that obtained by orthodox methods, while it is possible to improve on this considerably by careful choice of apparatus. Curiously enough, surface noise is by no means accentuated, and can, it appears, be even further minimised by the use of a suitable electrical filter. So far no reports as to record wear tests are available, but the detailed description will no doubt prove very interesting reading.

Astraordinary

"Astra sound-boxes are going well," the Gramophone Exchange reports. On Sunday morning, the 17th, someone, no doubt one of our readers, broke the front window of the shop in Shaftesbury Avenue—and in a jiffy all the Astras were gone.

GRAMOPHONE SOCIETIES' REPORTS.

The programme of a Beethoven lecture and recital given to the **LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY** by Mr. J. W. Harwood may be a guide to others who are bewildered by the range of choice. *Adagio cantabile* from Pathetic Sonata (Murdock); *Allegro* from Quartet in G, Op. 18, No. 2 (Lener S.Q.); *Larghetto* and *Rondo Allegro* from Violin Concerto in D (Kreisler); *Adagio* and *Rondo Allegro* from Piano Concerto No. 5 (Backhaus); and the Eighth Symphony, Weingartner and Philharmonic Orchestra.

The **SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY** on June 25th heard excerpts from the Mendelssohn and Beethoven Violin Concertos, the Schubert Trio in B flat; the Finale of the Eroica Symphony, the slow movement from the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto—and two choruses from the Meistersinger. July 30th is being or was devoted to organ records.

The **CENTRAL LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY**, on the other hand, at its July meeting was chiefly thrilled by *Tales from the Vienna Woods* as played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and by a discourse on "Needles and their Effect in Relation to Electrical Records" from Mr. G. W. Webb. This is the sort of discourse which ought to be published in THE GRAMOPHONE. The members of this Society went over the Columbia factory the other day and are promised a visit to the H.M.V. factory at Hayes in September.

The **SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY** had a lecture on Light Opera on July 11th from Mr. Henry Lewis, their president, with a programme of records from Turandot, Hoffmann, Carmen, Così fan Tutti, Figaro, Student Prince and Vagabond King. What exactly is light opera?

Of the other Societies—a *nil* return, except for the **BULUWAYO GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY**, which sends its June 23rd programme, ranging from Tamagno to Peter Dawson and from Bach to Borodin—all H.M.V. and all good.

THE FORUM

The following articles are unsolicited contributions from readers, dealing with this or that aspect of the gramophone to which each has given thought. A selection from the MSS. received is published every month, and prizes are offered every quarter. Articles should not exceed 1,500 words, and should be typewritten or written **very** legibly on one side only of the paper. They should be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 18, Frith Street, London, W. 1, marked "The Forum": and a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed.



EARLY EXPERIMENTS IN MECHANICAL MUSIC

By H. W. CRUNDELL

THE entertainment concluded with a concert of mechanical music; I cannot tell how it was produced, but the effect was pleasing." So runs a sentence in Mme. D'Arblay's "Evelina" (1778), and while we must agree that Dr. Burney's daughter would be a good judge of the effect we are sorry she left us in the dark as to the instruments reproduced. Whatever they were, it is certain that some rather curious attempts to render the voice and instrumental effects were made much earlier than Dr. Burney's day. The invention of automata capable of speech, for instance, has been ascribed to such surprising people as Roger Bacon and Descartes, while as regards mechanical music, something of the kind, if only as a curiosity, seems to have been achieved by just those enterprising folk who, almost in the middle ages, thought out the first modern timekeepers.

Beckmann's "History of Inventions" (1846 ed.) has many out of the way details concerning these flute-playing and speaking automata. The "particular go" of these figures often rested on a deception, and the habit of mind which delighted in such things is of course alien to present day notions of what constitutes a novelty. For anything on lines we can appreciate we must look to the ingenious 18th century after all, and we shall then find that the history of mechanical music, up to the time the gramophone and player piano were invented, is really the history of the musical box and its elaborations. And the musical box itself is an elaboration of the ubiquitous 18th century snuff box. Such, indeed, was the vogue at one time of the *tabatière musicale* that you will find in "Grove" an account of a once popular "Snuff Box Waltz," which seems to have been quite a good imitative effort. To-day I suppose there is a gradually dwindling number of people who can appreciate from experience the point of such piano pieces as De Severac's "Où l'on entend une vieille boîte à musique" (H.M.V. D.780), which has, of course, the same aim as the long forgotten Waltz.

Obsolete as the musical box is, the principle underlying the action is well known, and its application to the barrel organ and hurdy gurdy are only too familiar. But perhaps it is not so generally known that these ideas were once adapted to very ambitious ends, the revolving cylinder being used in conjunction with bells, levers and valves. One such queer triumph of these notions was exhibited in London in 1835—a mechanical trumpet, which performed "marches and other military pieces, arranged in four parts." At this exhibition there was also shown an automatic piano, which must have been worked on similar lines, since the perforated music roll seems to be a later idea.

When the devices mentioned above were used in combination some sort of orchestral effect could, of course, be obtained. Mälzel, of metronome fame, seems to have achieved a success of this kind, and it was for his invention, the "Panharmonicon," that Beethoven arranged the first version of the

"Battle" Symphony (Parlo. E.10555/6). Mälzel's invention doubtless became well known, for I have come across what appears to be an allusion to it in one of Lamb's papers in Hone's Every-Day Book: "But what shall we say to the Ass of Silenus, who, if we may trust to classic lore, by his own proper sounds, without thanks to cat or screech-owl, dismayed and put to rout a whole army of giants? Here was *anti-music* with a vengeance; a whole *Pan-Dis-Harmonicon* in a single lungs of leather." Like most lazy people, I read my Lamb without notes, and it was not until music began to interest me that I was able to hazard a solution to the meaning of this passage.

Mälzel was a remarkable man, for we not only find him inventing the metronome and the "Panharmonicon," but also acting as sponsor for an "automatic trumpeter." As has already been mentioned, these performing figures probably belong to the realm of the conjuring trick rather than to that of invention.

Readers of Browning will remember Abt Vogler "extemporising on an instrument of his own invention." This he called an orchestrion, but it seems to have been simply a very compact chamber organ. In 1851, however, Kauffmann, whose name is also connected with organ improvement, used the name to describe the complete wind orchestra, with kettledrums, he had invented, and thereafter the name crops up chiefly in connection with such musical mastodons. Patti installed one at Craig-y-Nos, quite possibly Kauffmann's, or an adaptation. That curious book "Music and Manners," by Beatty Kingston, tells us that this "superb" machine cost 3,000 guineas. It was christened "L'Ame du château," and needed the constant attention of Patti's major domo, William Heck. Its repertoire consisted of 52 operatic overtures and selections, and in reading about it one begins to wonder why the Panatrope is considered dear.

I am afraid this brief survey of an obsolescent field of human activity is rather dull, but it may help us to realize our present fortune. To-day the orchestrion and the musical box *et hoc genus omne* have been supplanted by the inventions we associate with such names as Edison and Berliner, and if these are not enough we can complete our equipment with a player piano and a loud speaker. These substitutes for the concert room are so much more versatile than their forerunners, and on the whole they are also much cheaper. Consider the price of Patti's orchestrion, with its range of 52 pieces, and then reflect on our catalogues, which we complain cover and recover the same well-worn ground! Is it not obvious that here is one field at any rate in which we have the best of it, even in comparison with the 18th century? If the *tabatières* of that period are still of interest it is to collectors of enamels rather than to musicians, while the Victorian orchestrion can hardly be of much interest to anyone at all.

H. W. CRUNDELL.

“UNRECORDED MASTERPIECES”

By RONALD SWAFFIELD

WITH the rich and splendid store of records now at the disposal of music lovers, it would perhaps seem unfitting to speak in any but the most glowing terms of the enterprising zeal and excellent programmes of the various companies. Yet there are one or two points about which I should like to speak.

There are so many masterpieces which still, for some strange reason, have been either overlooked or fought shy of by the Recording Committees. I refer to such a work as Charpentier's *Louise*, which, as far as I know, is completely ignored except for one song. This opera, as most of us doubtless know, is teeming with attractive melody, naive sensuousness and clever orchestration. Yet why this strange aloofness? Again, to take an entirely different example, there is the Brahms's *Requiem*, with its subtle rhythmic charm, colossal fugues and marvellous devotional atmosphere? “Velvet Face” made a sporting effort with Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* (though a cut version), and partial success, to say the least of it, was achieved in this with old recording. Imagine the *Requiem* by Stanley Roper's choir: it would be a revelation if they lived up to that wonderful carol record of December.

To turn again to opera, I do not dare to hope that such big works as *Louise* or *Rosenkavalier* can be done complete, but if not, there are some magnificent possibilities for recording some parts of them. In *Louise* there are beautiful orchestral interludes, solos, duets and choruses (one exceptionally fine piece of choral writing in Act III). *Rosenkavalier* is certainly better

represented, but in order to obtain a vocal record of the world-famed Trio, Act III, and the Duet at the opening of Act II, I had to call on “Odeon” for help and wait a full six weeks for the result. But it was worth it.

Vaughan Williams, whose genius nobody questions, is very poorly represented, and his great masterpiece *The Sea Symphony* finds no place in the catalogues at all! Holst is certainly better represented, and I presume we should have had the *Hymn of Jesus* if it had not been for its technical difficulties.

If the above-mentioned are too ambitious works we could surely have some of the smaller and easier choral works, such as Benjamin Dale's *Before the paling of the stars*. If necessary, it could probably be done on three big sides, as, to the best of my memory, it only takes about thirteen minutes to perform. Anyone who heard this work at the Hereford Festival in 1921 must have been deeply impressed with its exquisite melodic line and simple religious fervour. I sat simply spell-bound throughout the performance, and I can only describe the music as celestial. Brahms might have equalled it, but never surely excelled it.

Now we have the choirs: now we have the singers. (The composers go without saying.) Let us hear these great artists in their finest works, lest they fly to other lands where they can obtain greater scope for their art. We rarely produce a May Blyth or a Tudor Davies. Let us give them due honour, for they are too precious to lose.

RONALD SWAFFIELD.



THE APPEAL OF ORGAN RECORDS

By ALFRED H. BASSANO

IN face of the Editor's admitted dislike of the organ, and the sparse reply to his attempt to probe the demand for organ records, perhaps an amateur organist, of long years but short pretensions, may be allowed to give reasons for the faith that is in him. We may briefly dismiss the general public who hear the organ in Church or Hall and acquire a taste for more or less pure organ music; also those who are enraptured by freak organs, whether mouth-, street- or cinema. The former are but a non-performing class of organ lover, and are attracted much in the same way and for the same reasons as the player, while the latter need no consideration in the argument.

Undoubtedly, one great appeal of organ music is its “serenity” (I thank thee, London Editor, for teaching me that word). The level unemotional march of a melody, simple or polyphonic, has the same charm as the unsensuous flow of fine chamber music in its intellectual appeal. But the organ has a far wider appeal than this. To the double-hand execution of the pianoforte is added a third part, that of the pedal organ, corresponding to the bass instruments of the orchestra, and increasing the breadth and depth of the tone, not to mention the difficulties of the player. And as the harpsichord had two rows (manuals) of keys and “stops” to vary the quality of tone, so an infinite variety of tone and colour is obtainable on the organ. On a large instrument, with its four or more manuals, besides the pedal organ and dozens of “stops,” almost unlimited contrasts of colour and timbre are possible in rapid succession or alternation, and endless variety of solo and accompaniment. In effect, a skilful player is like

an orchestral composer-conductor who is able to call for any nuance of tone or any colour combination at will. But the organ also admits the student to an immense library of music unplayable by any other single instrument and of infinite variety of style and effect. Some organ music lends itself to translation for the orchestra, as, for instance, the interesting setting by Sir Edward Elgar of a fugue in C minor well known among Bach's organ fugues; and an arrangement of an organ Chorale (also of Bach) by Cuthbert Whitmore, the first being H.M.V. and the second Vocalion, and both are amplifications, in excellent taste, of the organ originals.

That “serenity” of tone, or the ability to maintain perfect evenness of tone, in melody or harmony, mechanically—i.e., not as the result of long practice as in the case of the piano—together with the complete command of volume and colour, confer on the player a rich reward for his study; and to technical skill, good musicianship adds that *soul* without which the best music is lifeless.

Hence, with these instinctive or acquired perceptions, the lover of the organ will naturally look for true gramophone reproduction. A few years ago the best available was a badly cut version, on one ten-inch side, old recording, of the Bach D minor Toccata (recently recorded by Mr. Cunningham), a Columbia issue played by McClellan; this record justified the remarks in the December number by the Editor, but was, at that time, no small achievement. Later on the writer got some Polydor records, played by Professor Fischer on an organ apparently by an *Italian* builder; the effect was all top and no bass. Electric recording set up a new standard, and pro-

duced the *Suite Gothique*, of Boelmann, which, for the first time, gave, on the new type of machine, an adequate idea of both organ and real pedal tone. This and subsequent records by Goss-Custard, Dupré, Cunningham, and others, do actually convey the illusion of the listener being in the hall itself. Nor is volume of tone the criterion for appreciation, amazing as it is; hear the charming *Question and Answer* of Wolstenholme (H.M.V.), by Goss-Custard, and then say whether or not the organ tone is pleasing and faithful.

As for *freak* organs—well, we do not judge the violin by the farm-yard noises of a *Carnival of Animals* (Saint-Saëns) nor a piano by banjo effects; and freak performances do not enter seriously into the question. As a critic once said—if people like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they would like. No one could assert that it is “organ” music—if, indeed, it be *music* at all. One might postulate that the use of any instrument for other than its own direct purpose is artificial and unmusical.

In all performance individuality counts high; but, given a good player, some of the grandest, the most intellectual, the most emotional music can now be brought within reach of the

ardent gramophonist; and the greatest credit is due to those firms who have solved the apparently impossible problems of recording so inaccessible and cumbrous an instrument as is the average large organ. Not all styles of organ music are suitable for the gramophone, and *stops* that are effective in a hall may be painful on a machine. Advance has been rapid, and it may well be that experiment will dispose of existing difficulties; one does not care to set any limit to the ingenuity of modern enterprise.

At any rate it seems quite clear that the demand has created the supply of organ records, and that the supply will increase that demand; and it is not too much to claim that the demand springs not from a passing crank fancy but from a musical sense at least as fastidious as in any other realm of music.

Personally, I have found interested listeners to organ records among all sorts of musical people, even if the proportion of lovers of the organ, say, to those of the orchestra, may not be great. The same can be said of chamber music; and no one ventures to dispute the good taste of those who love it.

ALFRED H. BASSANO.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPRECIATION

By ERNEST BROOKS (U.S.A.)

IN 1914 M. Calvocoressi wrote a few statements in the June *Etude* magazine, quoting Claude Debussy at length. The topic under discussion was how to judge, analyse and appreciate music, particularly the contemporary productions.

Debussy thus far has been one of the world's most keensighted in musical analysis and also most versatile in lingual expression as in musical. His wisdom is of the highest order in the judgment of new works, in that opinion should be conservative when pro-works are first introduced. It is often disastrous to attempt to mould the public's opinion of a new-comer, from the standpoint of damaging the artist's enthusiasm, which is infinitely more important than making up a few stereotyped descriptions for the public to repeat to each other in fatuous pretence of originality. To quote, “A point that I really wish to emphasize is that I consider it almost a crime to judge prematurely. The former policy, which consisted in allowing artists to ripen in peace and of taking no notice of them until their art had fully asserted itself, I consider far sounder than the actual one. It is unwise to unsettle young artists by making them the subjects of discussions that are often shallow and prejudiced. This febrile haste to dissent, dissect and classify is the disease of our time. Hardly has a composer appeared than one begins to devote essays to him; one pounces upon his works, one burdens his attempts with ambitious definitions.”

He goes further to say that the instinct in young artists to go ahead with keen and fervid curiosity shows a most praiseworthy attitude of mind. “It is good for young artists to be alive and to cast all around themselves, but I think *they* will sober down in due time.” The individual factor is too evident to discount; simple and candid impressions should replace opinionated criticisms.

By giving impressions rather than criticisms a great danger is avoided, that of misquotation. Criticisms can be bandied around from place to place until they are not recognizable by the originator. Impressions have the virtue of effervescence; they fade away and become so thin with attempted quotation that they turn meaningless and harmless, at least to more extent than any other form.

The public is not naturally segregated into nationalities as

far as music is concerned. When it seems so it is because of propaganda of the pseudo-critics. Subtle suggestion crumbles appalling amounts of original thought in the layman, who seldom gets the opportunity to do any thinking for himself when the thinking lies outside the ordinary course of life. Of course the layman has to allow much of his thinking to be done for him, because no man has the power to include all the interests which may intrigue him. But critics should occupy the place of teachers to some extent. By this I mean that they should use the wise and productive method of questioning to draw out individual responses instead of “laying down the law” to them, in the regular university manner.

It is this quality which I find admirable in the main writers of *THE GRAMOPHONE*. It is the reason that this magazine is liked widely and well contributed. Essentially, *THE GRAMOPHONE* is a publication of contributions, one of sincere amateurs and hobbyists. Such people get at the fundamentals of whatever they dig into. They have the precious modicum of scientific method about their searching to place real value on their findings. They are not so over-burdened with knowledge that they cannot see the wood for the trees. Their field is not pure and abstract science. They work with that enthusiasm which exists among amateurs in competition.

Though there is someone for each different kind and class of music recorded for the gramophone, the sociability accruing from the common meeting-place in our magazine is a force for the raising of ideals for good music. All music has its place, and some of it is to bring out the possibilities of appreciation of better music. At this point is the invaluable position which recorded music can bridge. In families trying to have enough music to fill in the small gap of necessary art, their appreciation gets into a rut, and they stop hearing different types of music. One kind becomes sufficient and they buy sheet after sheet of it. If they should have a gramophone they can also fall into the same mistake, but the chances are not so likely. Being so much easier to listen to than to perform, more records can pass the immature judgments of would-be musical people. Anyone can note many examples of appreciation of the finest music on the part of those in whom this appreciation would not be expected. They are to be found in *THE GRAMOPHONE*.

If they had to depend on the opinions of a few professional critics they would not even know about the music, much less get the opportunity to hear it. It is the fine services of **THE GRAMOPHONE** which lets them know what there is and what about it. All sides are given, and the reader can tell that good things are usually greatly disputed.

I think that one of the finest things **THE GRAMOPHONE** does for its readers is to inspire them into self expression. Just look back through the files and count the instances of letters and articles by men of all ranks and pursuits. Think of the development this means for many of them. Some of them never expected to raise their voices beyond the seas, even over the fields around their homes. That fact in itself makes them sober in their opinions. I mean they say something even though it should be facetious. A few magazines in the world are conducted in the same manner: for the readers to contribute to and feel that they are a part of it. In the case of **THE GRAMOPHONE** the value is greater than most because the columns are open to people of any part of the world, a place of contact for different nationalities, and a force for friendship and peace. Much could be said about this. Suffice it to say that it results in like-mindedness to a beneficial extent, besides the good it does for the composers, their music, or anything else that happens to get advertised thus. It ought to change the situation for men who write music getting slight remuneration. Royalties on records and music can become greater and more reasonable, so our great composers need no longer starve and have their productiveness stunted. Why should they have to teach to distraction in order to maintain themselves? Why should a composer have to write operas and symphonies in order to be great? When composers begin to enjoy the privileges which are due to them, then, and then only, will the worthy stand as such, and the rest climb or stay in their places.

Recorded music is one of the greatest industries in the world to-day, but it is only in its infancy. Being that, I believe that recording companies can hardly be too generous in production at reachable prices of machines and records. Perhaps twenty-five years will see the time when these companies will record practically everything written. That is not too extravagant a statement when it is considered that, the situation growing as it is, only a part of the world is listening to music to any extent, though it is hard to realize. It is hard for me to realize that there is an ever open field for the sale of automobiles, but the fact remains that not everyone in the world owns a car yet, even a Ford. It is the same with recorded music. With the multitudes of tastes and the inexhaustible field of customers, music has a long road of development to go through. Nothing is stopping the sale of records, even though radio has been accused of interfering with it. It is marching "on forever." In England the spirited competition between the companies is a challenge to the progressive ones to put forward their best efforts in business. I would call upon them to put forward their best efforts to make the world more musical also. In the United States the competition is not so keen, due to fewer companies. They can even more easily afford to use such generous measures. It is never profitless in the long run.

Young composers can soon become recognized through the medium of recording. That does not mean that a lot of trash is going to be foisted on the public. It means that the recording is going to show up the strength and weaknesses of their music, so it will improve and they will develop. It means that composers are going to produce more during their lives than the older ones did. It will not be because they write more shallow music, but that they can discover sooner what they should strengthen, and the world will be in a position to comment more speedily. "Two heads are better than one."

I think that perhaps the recording companies should have more performers under salary to play things that are requested. All kinds of soloists and ensemble organizations could be

maintained to play all music submitted, and much of it recorded. That is not an extravagance but merely another way to build trade. Orchestras are becoming smaller with the ability to write effects with more economy of instruments and with the ability of players to use a variety of instruments. So the maintenance would not be considerable. The music could be directed to an office of the company where a few music readers could examine the manuscripts in the same manner that they do in book companies. Those compositions which passed could be put in order for performance and thence to the process of recording. Soon, societies such as the N.G.S. will be organized all over the world. They would be a lucrative field for such progressive recording. In such great numbers they could each purchase a completely different set of records and still make the recording worth while. If anyone is concerned, do not be overwhelmed with the above. The process will naturally develop slowly enough to maintain balance. No one will become bankrupt over trying to carry out any of these suggestions. They merely should be incorporated as soon as possible.

When the status of recorded music rises this high then will also naturally rise the status of the listeners. They will have more intelligent opinions and art will actually mean something to them. When the senses are joined with intelligence the result is higher *class* all round. Who will join this pursuit?

ERNEST BROOKS.

BOOK REVIEW

FAMOUS SYMPHONIES (How to understand them) By J. F. Porte. Reeves, 4/6, with portraits.

Critics of books on listening to and understanding music—and they are many—often make use of an unreal and misleading analogy between music and poetry in deprecating the issue of such books. Who, they say, wants to know anything about the metrical structure of Keats's Odes? The answer is, no one probably but the professional poet. But then words and notes are very different things: the former evoke, for the most part, familiar images and feelings, the latter suggest nothing of the kind. While the music lover is free to listen in any way he chooses, that is in his own way, a great many people need help of the kind Mr. Porte has supplied in this little book. He alludes to the various recordings of the different symphonies and gives a few words on their interpretations. The one thing lacking in his book is illustrations in music type: but with these it would, of course, have bulked largely and expensively! Excellent portraits of a good many of the composers are included.

N. P.

LATE NEWS.

Selected Records.

Orchestral. *Either* First Movement of "New World Symphony," H.M.V. D1251, 6s. 6d., or *Rosenkavalier Waltz*, Brunswick 80009, 6s. 6d.

Instrumental. Erica Morini, Brunswick 80011, 6s. 6d., or Peggy Cochrane, Aco. G16220, 3s.; Mark Hambourg, H.M.V. B2478, 3s.

Vocal. La Scala Chorus, H.M.V. B2445, 3s., and Lotte Lehmann, Parlo. R20019, 6s. 6d., or Edith Furredge, V.F. 1211, 2s. 6d.

Light. Dajos Bela Orchestra, Parlo. E10592, 4s. 6d.; Gladys Moneriff, Voc. K05310, 4s. 6d.; The Revellers, H.M.V. B2504, 3s.; Jack Smith, H.M.V. B2496, 3s.; Chauve-Souris, Col. 4423, 3s.; Dick Robertson, Col. 4409, 3s.

Dance. The Seven Notes, Parlo. R3336, 3s.; Johann Strauss, Col. 9218, 4s. 6d.; Howard Lanin, Col. 4418, 3s.

London Editor.

NOTES AND QUERIES

[Each comment or question should be written briefly and clearly on a separate slip of paper and addressed to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1, as early as possible in the month. Full name and address must in all cases be given for reference.]

(520) **Collector's Corner.**—In digging out some old and worn records, I came across one of the *Adagio* from Beethoven's Trio in B flat, Op. 11, and another of the *Andante* from Reissiger's Trio, Op. 85, by the Renard Trio, H.M.V.; they must be getting on for 15 to 20 years old and of course are not now in the list. Can you tell me if either has been recorded since?—J. H. A., Barnes.

(521) **Collector's Corner.**—Spending an odd hour at Messrs. Foyle's a few days ago in search of rarities and bargains, I came across an old Columbia-Rena record by Morgan Kingston. As the recording seemed to me very good, and the voice and singing splendid. . . . I should be much indebted to any of your readers who could tell me anything of this singer. I have an idea that he sang in the German season at Covent Garden a few years ago. Has he recently recorded for the gramophone?—E.L.E., Wimbledon.

(522) **Electric Recordings.**—Why do not some other companies follow the excellent example of Polydor and give in their catalogues some distinctive mark to those records which are electric recordings?—J.H.S.R., Bristol.

(523) **Favourite Records.**—(See June, p. 39, 515). It is very difficult to select six records which may be termed one's favourites, as large works such as symphonies, concertos, etc., must obviously be omitted. With these restrictions I select the following: "Miserere," Destinn and Zenatello: "La Donna è mobile," John McCormack: Meistersinger Overture, Goossens's Orchestra: Nocturne in F sharp (Chopin), Busoni: Spanish Dance No. 8 (Sarasate), Kubelik: "Le Cygne," W. H. Squire.—J.H.S.R., Bristol.

(524) **Favourite Records.**—(a) Liu's Arias from *Turandot*, Rosina Torri (H.M.V., B.2409): I should think this the best value for money H.M.V. have published: (b) "The Legend of Kleinsack," Browning Mummery (Zono. A.293): (c) "Jerusalem," choral, with beautiful boy's voice (Voc. K.05265): (d) "Eriskany Love Lilt," Glasgow Orpheus Choir (H.M.V., E.409): (e) "Semiramide Overture," B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra (Col. 9076): (f) "Barber of Seville Overture," by the same (Col. 9166): (g) "Song of the Toreador," Peter Dawson (H.M.V., C.1007): (h) "Suite Gothique," organ, Herbert Dawson (H.M.V., C.1238): (j) "Softly Awakes my Heart," Muriel Brunskill (Col. 3328): (k) "Air on the G string," James Levey (Col. 3149): (l) "Song of the Volga Boatmen," Frank Titterton, (Voc. X.9183): (m) "Who is Sylvia?" Olga Haley (Voc. X.9561). All these give me the greatest pleasure and all are splendid on both sides, and wonderful value for money, especially the two first.—M.J., Lewes.

(525) **Handel Concerto.**—Which Concerto in G minor is played on the organ record by Dr. Henry Ley, H.M.V., C.1314? And who is the publisher?—C.S., Wakefield.

(526) **Needle Sockets.**—(See letter, June, p. 37).—There is no reason why steel needles should not be made in the form of fibres, so as to fit the almost universal triangular sockets. They would be more rigid and would have less tendency to bend at the point. Steel needles seldom wear, but bend out of action. A triangular section stylus could be ground and set like a tool-bar for screw-cutting. This would save expense and the inconvenience of many used needles.—A.B., Glasgow.

[There are very good reasons why a triangular section stylus should not be used:

- (1) Steel has not the flexibility of bamboo and the sharp edges would cut the record to pieces at the first playing. A lathe tool is not exactly a desirable model for a reproducing stylus.
- (2) The alternative of using a triangular shank and a conical point is no doubt ruled out by consideration of expense in manufacture.

However, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that before long we shall see a permanent reproducing stylus.—P.W.]

(527) **Elgar.**—Your reviewer's notice of the Elgar Birthday records reminds me that in my letter on p. 475 (April) I omitted what is probably the cheapest Elgar work ever issued—the "Dream of Gerontius," eight discs with a splendid annotated album, price 37s., issued by Edison Bell. . . . We must have the noble violin concerto recorded complete by Albert Sammons, who is generally recognized as being the finest exponent of it.—J.C.W. Chapman, London, S.W.17.

(528) **A Good Record.**—Someone has made a sad misstatement to "Peppering." His page is read and with interest. My only criticism of his review last month is that he did not praise Zono. A.319, "Poet and Peasant Overture," enough. This record easily beats any previous issue and is exceptional value for 4s.—J.H.L., Nottingham.

(529) **The Shannon Four.**—I should like to thank the Shannon Four for their "Carry me back" and "The Old Oaken Bucket" (which is by Samuel Woodworth, not "unknown" as labelled on Regal 8812). These "Backwoods Ballads" appeal to me. May we have "On the Banks of the Brandy-wine" (Dresser), "Dear old girl" (Buck-Morse), "In dear old Georgia," "California and you" etc.?—T.L., Fareham.

(530) **Miscellaneous.**—(a) What are the best of Aroldo Lindi's records? (b) Are the words in "Devotion," sung by the Mormon Tabernacle choir, from the pen of a Mormon? (c) I suggest that Parlophone should give us some of the Odeon records of Alfred Piccaver and (d) Columbia records of Stabile in "Largo al factotum" and "Credo," which would admirably suit his style.—J.N.R., Beckenham.

(531) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) "Stille Nacht," Silent Night, by Gruber, preferably choral: (b) "Di quella pira": (c) Hislop.—W.I.H., Ware.

(532) **Savoy Opera Records.**—In your last issue, Mr. Cameron, in his article on the records of the Savoy Operas, seems to have overlooked that fine series made by the Odeon Co. in pre-war days. There was a fat album of "Pinafore," which was very fine, and some of the contents I still have and consider as good as those then issued by H.M.V., though not so loud. I believe there were other albums issued of other Savoy Operas and know that there were a good many single discs of various items in the Gilbert and Sullivan list—all noteworthy.—G.H.V., Bedford Park.

(533) **Words Wanted.**—(a) "Travellers all of every station" from Balfe's "Siege of Rochelle," H.M.V. C.1169. (b) "King Charles," Peter Dawson, H.M.V. B.1242.—J.W.C., Hull.

[For (b) try any edition of Browning's Cavalier Tunes, No. 2, "Give a rouse."—Ed.]

(534) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) Concerted vocal version of "God be with you till we meet again" and "Safe in the arms of Jesus"; (b) Waltz or vocal version of "Because I love you."—G.O.J.-Q., Gold Coast.

[Note.—On p. 476, April, under "Suggestions (1)" line 8 "driving" is a misprint for "dairy."—Ed.]

CORRESPONDENCE

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

THE INDEX TO VOL. IV.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—The note by the compiler of the Index to Vol IV., published on page 56 of the last issue, while grateful to me as I have no doubt it is to the others mentioned by name, is, I fear, rather misleading. It is always a pleasure to receive a generous acknowledgment of assistance however slight, but the danger of expressing this in public is that it tends to obscure the true position.

The real worker in this case was the compiler himself. The obvious way in which to recognise this is to buy a copy of the Index (which, by the way, is priced at about one-third of the cost of production without allowing anything for compilation), but as few have shown any desire to do so up to now, I cannot forbear paying a more public tribute.

The Index is about the biggest thing of its kind that has ever been attempted, and will be invaluable for reference purposes. All can discover this for themselves by a mere glance, but what the general reader will never know is the skill and care with which this great task was accomplished. Only those who read the proofs can know this, and as one who had this pleasure (and real pleasure it was, as it always is to do any work in the congenial atmosphere which permeates No. 58, Frith Street), I should like on my own behalf, on behalf of my colleagues I am sure, and on behalf of a large section of readers I hope, to pay tribute where tribute is due.

While I have my pen to paper, I should also like to corroborate what Mr. Wilson said in his letter last month. I had been perturbed by the hard and slightly steely quality of the loud high notes in some of the recent H.M.V. string quartet recordings. I mentioned this to Mr. Wilson the last time we foregathered and played a record as an illustration. He had, as usual, a battery of sound-boxes concealed in various places about his person, and produced one with the injunction to "try it with that." I did, and the result was astonishing. Without losing a trace of the definition and clarity, all "steeliness" disappeared as if by magic, leaving in its stead the keen bite of bow on string which we all strive to obtain, but which is so elusive.

I tried hard but unsuccessfully to make Mr. Wilson forget all about this sound-box and leave it behind him! I did, however, succeed in extracting a promise to make me a duplicate and am looking forward to the fulfilment of this promise when he has the time to spare.

Halifax. Yours sincerely,
W. A. CHISLETT.

NOTE ON LEAKS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Immediately on reading Mr. Wilson's note in your last issue on the importance of an air-tight sound-conduit, I put his idea into practice by the application of vaseline to the joints. The result has been a miracle! The lower half of the scale is very much more resonant, louder, musically purer in tone, and more clearly defined. Minor details and nuances which previously passed unnoticed, or almost so, are now clearly audible. I was particularly amazed to notice that certain notes in string quartets were played with

a rapid to and fro movement of the bow which previously I had thought were smooth continuous notes. The vibrant boom of the lower notes on the organ are remarkable. In string quartet the instruments seem much nearer, the illusion of their actual presence almost complete.

The leak in the ball-bearing joint of my sound-arm, I must admit, was considerable, but the quality of my reproduction had previously been very good. I can enthusiastically state that all the other improvements which I had effected—correcting needle-track error, altering needle angle, smoothing irregularities inside the sound conduit, fitting a life-belt, etc.—all have been eclipsed by this extraordinarily simple measure. One wonders how many more miracles the profound Mr. Wilson may have quietly and unostentatiously up his sleeve!

Yours very gratefully,
E. H. WILKINS.

Wylde Green.

THE LIFE BELT.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—Owners of small gramophones, to which category, presumably, my table grand machine belongs, may be interested to know that I have found that the most efficacious method of controlling the longitudinal flexibility of the "Lifebelt" is by inserting a couple of flat springs under the ring, one each top and bottom of the belt. At the sides of the belt the springs had little or no effect, but as soon as I shifted them round to the top and bottom there was no slipping forward of the needle whatever.

Yours faithfully,
J. T. FISHER.

Balham, S.W. 12.

THE VALUE OF WORDS IN VOCAL MUSIC.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—In listening to vocal music we are fortunately not dependent for our pleasure on being able to hear the words; but it cannot be denied that in many cases a knowledge of the words does increase the pleasure. For example, in the beautiful Grail Scene from Parsifal, recorded by H.M.V., I know that my own joy in hearing it would be increased if I knew what words were being sung. I am told, however, that the only way to obtain the words is to buy the full score.

One reason why many people find instrumental music more satisfying than vocal is this notorious difficulty in catching the words. It is true the new recording and improved reproduction have done much to remove the difficulty, but there are some consonants which the gramophone seems unable to reproduce at all clearly. I am inclined to think, however, that the difficulty lies deeper than the recording and reproducing, though they may be still further improved. For even in the concert hall itself how many of us really catch what is sung when we are not provided with a book of words?

It is the fashion to blame the singers for this, and there is no doubt that many vocalists pay less attention to distinctness of diction than they might. But I believe that the difficulty lies chiefly with the words themselves and with the music. I have heard "The Prize Song" from The Mastersingers on no less than four records by different singers, including John McCormack, whose diction is very clear, and in each case the difficulty of hearing the words occurred in the same places, which looked as if the fault lay in the words and music rather than in the singers. In ordinary conversation we actually hear distinctly only a part of what other people say (for very few people speak distinctly); but our minds fill in the gaps where our ears fail us, and we think we hear more than we actually do. But suppose someone makes some rather unusual remark or uses some unconventional word; then, unless the speaker is unusually clear or we are more than usually attentive, we find ourselves obliged to ask him to repeat the remark.

The same happens if the speaker employs an intonation that is unfamiliar to us; we do not quickly recognise what he says. Here in Canada anyone who speaks with an English intonation is frequently not understood at once by the native-born Canadian; and similarly an Englishman, especially if he is new to the country, often finds himself obliged to ask his Canadian friends what they said. This is not a matter of strange words or unusual pronunciation, but of difference in intonation.

Now since the words of most vocal numbers are in poetry, which often employs unfamiliar and unusual expressions, it is not surprising that our minds do not quickly grasp what is sung. And, since music is in fact a most elaborate form of intonation, the singing of the words adds to the difficulty.

If we all habitually conversed in music after the manner of grand opera, our minds would no doubt more quickly take in the words as well as the melody of what is sung.

My contention is that, no matter how clear the diction of the singer, or how efficient the recording and reproduction, a great deal of vocal music will always present the difficulty of

hearing the words, because it lies in the words and the music themselves.

It would be interesting to know what an expert like Mr. Klein thinks about this. Meanwhile, it would add greatly to the pleasure and profit of gramophiles if the recording companies, which already cater so generously for our delight in good music, would add to their present liberality, wherever possible, printed copies of the words of vocal numbers. The Edison Bell Company set a good example in providing a complete book of words with their edition of Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius," which adds immensely to the value of the records. But many music lovers would willingly pay a few pence extra for the words if the companies could not afford to give them away with the records.

THE GRAMOPHONE has done so much for us that it occurred to me that a discussion of the matter in your columns might lead to some help being given in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Keremeos.

British Columbia.

(Revd.) W. ARTHUR B. CLEMENTSON.



TRANSLATIONS

(Contributed by H. F. V. LITTLE)

DIE LORELEI (The Loreley)

Poem by Heine.

Music by Liszt.

Davies, H.M.V., D.1098, 12in., d.s., black (IV, 79).

Miller, Victor, 55056, 12in., d.s., blue.

Ich weiss nicht, was soll's bedeuten,
I know not what it can mean,

Das ich :| so traurig | bin ;
That :| so sad | am I ;

Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten,
A legend of by-gone times

:| Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn :|
:| Will not go from my mind. |

Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,
The air is cool and it grows dark

Und :| ruhig | fließt der Rhein ;
And :| tranquilly | flows the Rhine,

Und ruhig fließt der Rhein ;
And tranquilly flows the Rhine ;

Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt
The summit of the rock gleams

:| Im Abendsonnenschein. |
:| In the sunset-glow. |

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
The most lovely and wondrous maiden

Dort oben wunderbar,
There on high is seated ;

Ihr gold'nes Geschmeide blitzet,
Her golden jewels glitter,

Sie kämmt ihr gold'nes Haar.
She combs her golden hair.

Sie kämmt es mit gold'nem Kamme,
She combs it with a golden comb

Und singt ein Lied dabei ;
And sings a song the while ;

Das hat eine wundersame,
It has a strange, magic,

:| Gewalt'ge Melodei. |
:| All-powerful melody. |

Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe
The boatman in his little skiff

Ergreift es mit wildem Weh ;
It fills with violent longing ;

Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
He sees not the rocky shore,

Er schaut nur :| hinauf | in die Höh'
He only stares :| up | at the peak.

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
I fancy the waves devour,

Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn ;
In the end, boatman and craft ;

:| Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
And this, with her singing,

Die Lorelei, die Lorelei getan, |
The Loreley, the Loreley has done,

Die Lorelei getan.
The Loreley has done.

QUANTO È BELLA (L'elisir d'amore—Donizetti)

Bonci, Col., D.8086, 10in., d.s., l. blue.
Gigli, H.M.V., D.A.797, 10in., d.s., red.
Sherwood, Col., 4198, 10in., dark blue.

Quanto è bella, quanto è cara!
How fair she is, how dear she is!
Più la vedo e più mi piace;
The more I see her the more I'm charmed;
Ma in quel cor non son capace
But in her heart I'm powerless
Lieve affetto ad ispirar.
To inspire the least affection.
Essa legge—studia—impara—
She reads—studies—learns—
Non vi ha cosa ad essa ignota,
Nothing is unknown to her;
E io son sempre un' idiota,
While I am always stupid,
Io non so che sospirar.
I know nought but how to sigh.
Quanto è bella, quanto è cara! Ah!
Più la vedo . . . etc.

DAS VEILCHEN (The Violet)

Poem by Goethe.

Music by Mozart

Irmeler Ladies' Choir, Parlophone, E.10363, 12in., d.s.

Ein Veilchen auf der Wiese stand,
A violet in the meadow growing
Gebückt in sich und unbekannt;
Drooped on its stem, unnoticed,
Es war ein herzig's Veilchen.
The dearest little violet.
Da kam eine junge Schäferin,
There came a young shepherdess,
Mit leichtem Schritt und munterm Sinn,
Daintily tripping, blithe and gay,
Daher, daher, die Wiese her, und sang.
Along, along the meadow, singing.
"Ach!" denkt das Veilchen, "wär' ich nur
"Oh," thought the violet, "if only I were
Die schönste Blume der Natur,
The fairest flower in nature—
Ach, nur ein kleines Veilchen,
Ah, only for a little while—
Bis mich das Liebochen abgepflückt
Till this dear maid had gathered me
Und an dem Busen matt gedrückt!
And pressed me, weary, to her heart!
Ach nur, ach nur ein Viertelstündchen lang!"
Ah, only, ah, only one brief quarter of an hour!"
Ach! aber ach! das Mädchen kam
But oh, alas, the maid drew nigh
Und nicht in acht das Veilchen nahm,
And, heeding not the little flower,

Ertrat das arme Veilchen
She trod on that poor violet.
Es sank und starb und freut' sich noch:
It sank and died, yet it rejoiced;
"Und sterb' ich denn, so sterb' ich doch
"For if I die, I still shall die
Durch sie, durch sie, zu ihren Füßen doch."
Through her, through her, and at her feet."
Das arme Veilchen!
Es war ein herzig's Veilchen.

ELLE OUVRE SA FENÊTRE— IL M'AIME (Ei m'ama; Er liebt mich)

(Faust—Gounod).

Farrar and Journet, H.M.V., D.K.106, 12in. d.s., buff.
Lehmann, Polydor, 70694, 10in., d.s., red.
The Finale to the Garden Scene.

Mefistopheles.
Tête folle!
Dolt!
Faust.
Tu nous écoutais?
Wert thou eavesdropping?
Me. Par bonheur. Vous auriez grand besoin,
Luckily. 'Twould seem most needful,
Docteur, qu'on vous renvoyât à l'école.
Doctor, thou shouldst return to school.
F. Laisse-moi!
Leave me!
Me. Daignez seulement écouter un moment
Deign but to listen for a moment
Ce qu'elle va conter aux étoiles, cher maître.
To what she is going to tell the stars, dear master.
Tenez! Elle ouvre sa fenêtre.
Quiet! She is opening her window.
Marguerite.
:| Il m'aime! |: Quel trouble en mon cœur!
He loves me! What joy thrills my heart!
L'oiseau chante, le vent murmure,
Birds sing, breezes whisper,
Tous les voix de la nature
All the voices of Nature
Me redisent en chœur, :| "Il t'aime!" |: ,
Repeat to me in chorus, "He loves thee!"
Ah, qu'il est doux de vivre!
Ah, how sweet is life!
Le ciel me sourit, :| l'air m'enivre. |: ,
Heaven smiles upon me, the air enchants me.
Est-ce de plaisir et d'amour
Is it with happiness and love
Que la feuille tremble et palpite?
That the leaves tremble and flutter?
:| Demain! |: Ah, presse ton retour,
To-morrow! Ah, hasten thy return,
Cher bien-aimé! :| Vien! |: ,
My dearest love! Come!
F. Marguerite!
Marguerite!
Me. Hein! Ha ha ha ha ha!

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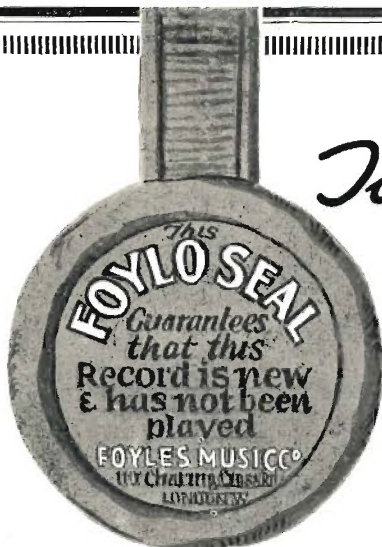
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